

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 688.—VOL. XXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 8, 1876.

[PRICE ONE PENNY]



[SIR CHARLES AMORY PROPOSER.]

BASIL RIVINGTON'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XVI.

Say not brightest,
Love is lightest,
Oh! he must be heavier far
Than that trifling,
Sweet flower rifling
Fluttering, gay-wing'd wanderer.

"Essex is rather a flat county, I believe," ventured Doll, who had been reading up a geography book for the express purpose.

Val looked thunderstruck.

Mr. Sheepwell answered promptly.

"In some places, miss. You see it isn't all alike. Where there are hills its high, and where there ain't its flat.

"Exactly," acquiesced Doll.

"And do you think you shall like London?" pursued Val. "It must be a great change after the country."

"Yes, miss, it is a little. You see it's a larger place than Wedsy, and one sees more people. Perhaps you don't know Wedsy, miss?"

Neither of the sisters had ever heard the name. They replied in chorus that they had not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Wedsy, but were sure it must be a most enchanting place.

"I live at Wedsy," communicated Mr. Sheepwell. "I was born at Wedsy. My mother lives there, and my father too."

"Is it a pretty place. What can one see there?" "Not so pretty as London, miss. There's plenty of oows and turnip fields. Do you like turnips, miss?"

"They are a most delicious vegetable."

"Ay, miss, that's just what I think. Boiled nicely, and then mashed with plenty of black pepper—very

nice indeed. I'm very forgetful, really, miss. I hope you'll excuse me," to Val, "and you too, miss," turning to Doll; "but I really quite forgot it."

"Forgot what?" was the mental query of both sisters, but they only smiled sweetly and listened with deep attention.

"To inquire for your ma. I hope she feels herself pretty brisk this morning."

Not quite understanding the meaning of brisk, the sisters answered that their mother was very well.

"Ah, it's the same thing," commented Timothy. "We always say brisk down at Wedsy—Wedsy, miss, is a very brisk place."

"I am sure it must be. Do you go to church or chapel, Mr. Sheepwell."

"Well, really, miss, I'm not particular which. I generally go to chapel down at Wedsy. You see," in a burst of confidence, "down at Wedsy the chapel seats are full an inch broader than the church once."

"But what difference can that make, Mr. Sheepwell?"

"More comfortable to nap on, miss. We've a very powerful preacher at our chapel, miss. His voice is just like the noise of a pickaxe; it always sends me fast asleep."

"But don't you find it very inconvenient. You might get locked in some day."

"Oh no, miss, begging your pardon for contradicting you, I always wake up when they begin to sing the last hymn. I couldn't sleep through that, anyhow."

"It is very beautiful, I suppose?"

"It's very loud, miss; I don't know about the beauty. Each of them tries who can get the highest. It always wakes me straight up when they begin."

"We were going to ask whether you would like to accompany us to church, Mr. Sheepwell, but perhaps you don't feel inclined."

"Delighted, miss, delighted; but if the sermon is long and I should drop off to sleep you won't feel hurt, because it's what I always do at Wedsy."

It should be mentioned, to the credit of Wedsyttes in general and of Mr. Sheepwell in particular, that the latter's Sunday attire was slightly different from that in which he first presented himself at No. 9, Night Lane.

A darker and somewhat better fitting suit of gray, an overcoat of chocolate brown, a real beaver hat, so much too big for him that it slipped over on to his nose, hiding a great part of that member from view, a pair of real dogskin gloves, a scarf of brilliant red and green, and in one hand a tiny walking-stick.

This was the "get up" in which Mr. Timothy Sheepwell prepared to escort the Misses Grubington to church.

In the whole course of their lives it was the first time they had possessed a male escort, and I only hope they fully appreciated it.

We left Sir Charles Amory in the fragrant conservatory waiting for Blanche Fitz Charles's answer. He did not feel particularly anxious as to its purport.

He knew that he was the last scion of a grand old race, that his wife would "walk in silk attire and silks hae to spare," and he fancied that no woman would deem it an unhappy fate to be ever at his side, the mistress of his home, the sharer of his honours.

There came to him, too, the memory of another girl, as young as Blanche, who had loved him with passionate intensity, had screened his faults and had discovered virtues in him apart from his wealth and rank.

But he did not care to think of her. She lay in the past, a past in which he was not the rich young baronet, but the needy Mr. Amory, so he was glad when the sound of Blanche's voice broke the spell which memory had thrown around him.

"Sir Charles, I thank you for your offer. I esteem you as a friend, but I cannot be your wife."

A vivid blush had come to her fair cheek, but the voice did not falter.

The baronet was surprised.

"I love you, Blanche, tenderly and truly. I will try my utmost to make you happy."

"I should never be happy as your wife, Sir Charles. Forgive me for speaking thus plainly."

"But why?"

"I do not love you."

"But that will come in time," he argued.

Oh, how many, many men have tried this argument; with how many a blushing, shrinking girl has it prevailed. She has married without love, trusting for it to come afterwards. And what has been the result? The love comes—almost every woman loves once in life; but does it always come for him she has sworn to love, honour and obey? If not, better for her never to have wed at all—better for her path to have gone on in its undisturbed calm, better anything than for her to awaken at the same moment to the bliss of love and the pain of bondage.

But Blanche was safe from this. Such would never be her fate. Her heart was given once and for all. She had neither the will nor the power to recall it.

To many gentle women like herself it comes to love down, to love men whom they must pity and excuse rather than respect and esteem; but Blanche had the blessed privilege to love up.

Gerard Danville had small means; albeit his income was something above the eighty pounds per annum assigned to him by the Blackshire gossips; but he was a clergyman who taught the true faith, whose feet were already fixed firmly on the steep ascent of Heaven, and who would aid, not hinder, his wife in her attempts to climb it too.

Sir Charles took Blanche's hand, and repeated:

"That will come in time."

"It might to some women, perhaps, but not to me, Sir Charles, you are a gentleman; I feel sure you will respect my secret. My affections are engaged already."

"Your mother told me you were free."

"I am free so far that no public vows, no ratified engagement, binds me. My mother would have it so. Until I am of age I must obey her."

"And then?"

He made no apology for his question.

Blanche probably deemed that none was needed, for she answered:

"Then I shall follow my own wishes. But I am only nineteen now; I have almost two years to wait."

For once Sir Charles Amory felt grieved for sorrows in which he had no share as the bright girl spoke so hopefully of waiting two years.

He knew that he was in the presence of a true woman, that she would never change, and with a generosity he had seldom shown, he determined to do all in his power to befriend the mad she loved.

He rejoined, with simple dignity:

"Miss Fitz Charles, I will not say that I am not disappointed, but I thank you for your frank, truthful answer, and I pray that in whatever path you choose you may be happy."

She murmured, "Thank you."

He offered her his arm, and they re-entered the drawing-room.

Many an eye was cast on them, for all present believed they gazed on the future Lady Amory.

Blanche trembled when she encountered her mother's gaze.

The baronet led her to a chair and left her.

He soon afterwards encountered the estimable Elizabeth Rivington.

Now as this lady had always chosen to regard Blanche as the special property of her son, from what caprice no one could imagine, since the young people had never manifested any but the most ordinary liking for each other, she was not best pleased at the baronet's attentions to the demoiselle, besides she had a daughter herself, and who better than her Belinda could fill the position of Lady Amory?

Sir Charles had taken the measure of Mrs. Rivington's character accurately; he knew the being with whom he had to deal, knew that her neighbours' affairs were at the tips of her fingers, and it only required a reasonable amount of flattery to draw them forth.

The skilful manoeuvrer danced with Belinda, enquired after Duke, and finally paid the squire's lady some delicate compliment as to the tasteful adornments of Rivington House; she smiled, and he knew he should obtain the information that he wanted.

Elizabeth could hardly believe her eyes. Here was everyone saying Sir Charles was engaged to Blanche Fitz Charles, and let her be neglecting that young lady thoroughly, actually only dancing with her once. She determined with feminine instinct to find out all about it.

"A pretty scene," she whispered, "Lady Fitz Charles knows so well how to arrange an affair like this."

"And other affairs too," remarked Sir Charles with a knowing smile; "her ladyship is a wonderful manager."

"She can manage everything except her daughters," said Mrs. Rivington, maliciously.

"Are they such very undutiful young ladies?"

"Mary is well enough, quiet, and rather stupid; as to Blanche, she is just pining away."

"Pining away! I am sure she does not look so."

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness, Sir Charles," quoted Elizabeth, with good effect.

"And what particular bitterness is this?"

"Oh, one never feels quite sure of these things, only little birds do say that last spring a certain gentleman was bold enough to propose for the hand of Miss Blanche Fitz Charles, that the young lady herself was more than inclined to say 'yes,' but that madame la mère stepped in to the rescue and politely intimated to Mr. Gerard Danville that his absence would be more agreeable than his visits."

"What, the curate at Langley Church?" alluding to a village of a few miles distant.

"Yes. He has charming manners and comes of a good family, and our fair heiress desires something more for her daughter."

Sir Charles Amory did not contradict her. Apparently he was tired of her chatter, for, with a courteous farewell, he quitted her side, and soon after left the reception-rooms of Lady Fitz Charles.

His was a powerful mind; he had those talents which are above mediocrity, which must render their possessor eminently good or eminently bad. Beneath the languid indifference which so charmed the fashionable world were passions deep and strong.

Full many a wrong, many wicked, thing had Charles Amory done in his life, but as he sat in his lonely home, on his return from the steeple dancings, his heart was strangely softened.

Why should Blanche wear out her fair youth in weary waiting? Why should Gerard Danville labour in the good cause alone and unaided?

The memory of that other girl came back again. That girl had been Charles Amory's first love.

In a dingy city church he had sworn to cleave to her only till death did them part.

She had been good and true, but, with his fickle nature, he had tired and wearied of her. He was not with her when she died, he did not follow her to the grave; he cared not for the blow that left him free to seek another—a nobler, but not a truer bride.

And yet this night, when one might have supposed his mind would be full of Blanche Fitz Charles, it seemed as though the image of his lost bride were ever present with him.

He thought of her as he had known her first, a careless, blooming girl; then, later on, as a blushing, shrinking fiancée; then as a happy wife, and then—

But we will not speak of that just now.

Smoking cigars, Sir Charles went through all these recollections, and his pity for Blanche deepened, and he resolved to do what he could to help her.

The latest news that Blackshire heard was that Sir Charles had started for London. Blackshire marvelled, Lady Fitz Charles was furious, and Blanche's face grew paler as the days wore on, and all the reproaches and anger she had so dreaded came.

Arrived in the metropolis, our baronet called upon a chosen friend of his own, an old schoolfellow that had always been his better angel. Far different were their paths in life. Sir Charles was rich and led an aimless, idle life; Vernon Digby, the younger son of a needy peer, had but little save his decent coat of, but he was already in Parliament, where he was known to his party as a man to be relied on; to the Opposition as one sure to make his mark.

The friends met with warmth; they talked long and earnestly, Sir Charles evidently urging some request. The rising M.P. committed himself to no rash promises, but cautiously said he would see what could be done.

The M.P. invited his friend to dinner, not at the club, but at the family mansion, Elmore House. Lord B— received him with courtesy great. After dinner they held a long consultation over their wine. The rich commoner handed the needy patrician a cheque, and their bargain was accomplished.

One brief fortnight after she had refused the hand of Sir Charles Amory, Blanche Fitz Charles sat alone in the drawing-room of her mother's house; my lady and her elder daughter were absent, so there was no need for the girl to try to rouse herself from the sadness that pressed down her spirits, such a sadness as I hope you, reader, may never know, that of waiting, of hope deferred.

A footman entered and handed her a card; half dreamily she took it and read thereon the name

dearest to her on earth; a minute more and the servant had retired, she and her true love were face to face.

"Gerald," her tone was a mingling of gladness and fear—gladness to see him once again, fear of her mother's anger.

"Blanche, my darling, my own, I am come once more to ask you to give yourself to me."

He spoke with a proud, fond joy. Blanche was amazed. She did not withdraw the hand he had taken. She looked up with her great love beaming in her eyes.

"But Mamma?"

"I think I can manage that, Blanche. Wonderful things have happened. I am no longer curate of Langley, but rector of Banton."

"Of Banton?" for Banton was one of the richest livings of the county, it was worth quite a thousand a year.

"Lord B—, in whose gift it is, wrote and offered me the living; most generous of him, for I have never even seen him."

"He must have heard of you," with loving pride.

"And what is your answer?"

"You know mine, Gerald, and I think even mamma will relent now."

At this very moment Lady Fitz Charles entered, Blanche blushed furiously, but the young rector was unmoved.

CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER that chance sight of Duke Rivington, Ida Colville had become yet more discontented with her lot. Mrs. Club was kind and tender even, but the girl needed something more; she needed someone to understand and sympathize with the longings of her soul, she wanted someone to talk of the things she best loved, those higher things in art and nature of which poor uneducated Mrs. Club had no knowledge.

When the New Year was a few days old, while Duke Rivington was attending the Blackshire gaities with little heart and less enjoyment than of old, Ida brought herself of her fellow traveller out of his mansion of his wife.

Whatever Mrs. Grubbington might be, if she resembled her husband she would have a kindly manner, would spare a word of sympathy for the orphan; so one afternoon Miss Colville dressed herself with more than usual care and set off for the aristocratic district known as Night Lane, Camden Town.

In this world there are a class beyond society's pale who do not live by rule, have four meals a day, go to church twice on Sunday, etc. Bohemians some call them, because they have no regular mode of living, no settled way of life; but these people, whom the pious matron deems beneath her notice, have often hearts more full of the milk of human kindness than their proper, steady, irreproachable neighbours.

So it was with the Grubbingtons; they received Ida Colville, or as she introduced herself to them, Ada Loville, with a warm welcome. Had she been an old friend suddenly restored to them they could not have seemed more glad to see her. Matilda remembered her husband's account of her, the girl admired her fair, sweet face, her delicate white hands; nothing would do but she must stay to tea, and nothing loth to take for once a meal out of Middleton Street, she acquiesced. The enormous sum paid weekly by Mr. Sheepwell for the accommodation of his noble self had just been paid, therefore the establishment was able to indulge in a cake and even some shrimps for the occasion.

With that delicate sense of honour so few possess, Ida Colville frankly informed her hostess of her engagement at the "Nympha Resort," but to her surprise, Matilda only congratulated her on her success and wished her own daughters could imitate it; and then the Grubbingtons had to tell her something of their history, which of course included the rise and fall of several companies.

Six o'clock came, and although Ida was not due at the "Nympha Resort" till half-past eight, she had begun to think of taking her departure when a knock at the door announced a visitor.

"Surely that can't be Mr. Sheepwell?" blushing inquired Val.

"Go and see."

But it was a very different personage from Timothy Sheepwell that returned with Val; a tall, handsome man with expressive dark eyes and mobile features.

Ida felt conscious that her colour rose as she recognised the stranger she had seen some weeks before in Mr. Caution's private sanctum.

Surely he would not remember her; the chance acquaintance of a few brief minutes; her doubts were soon solved. Mrs. Grubbington affectionately greeted her son and then she turned to Ida.

"Miss Colville, let me introduce you to my son Mr. Percy Harecourt, Percy, this is Miss Loville, a special friend of ours."

Miss Loville thought that if this were so special friends were very quickly made.

Percy bowed with as perfect dignity as though he had never seen her face before; in reality he recognised her at once and was unfeignedly glad to meet the beautiful girl again, and even as he felt so he reproached himself; what mattered to him, a severe unbeliever in the sex, that a woman's face was fair, her voice low and tender.

He took a seat in the shabby parlour and chatted gaily in his light, easy fashion; for a little while Ida listened with a well pleased attention, then she rose.

"Surely you are not going yet?" spoke Matilda. Ida glanced at her watch, which with several other remnants of brighter days had found their way back since her engagement at the "Nymphs' Resort."

"Half-past six," she said, pleasantly, "I really must, thank you very much."

She did not say what for, but Matilda's her womanly feelings understood. When Ida stood before her ready to say "good-bye," she pressed a kiss on the fair cheek and bade its owner come again soon.

"How pretty she is," sighed Doll, when the door had closed on their visitor.

"She is very beautiful," said Percy, gravely; "where did you pick her up, mother?"

"I did not pick her up at all, Percy," returned Mrs. Grabington, indignantly.

"Well, where did you find her? who introduced her to you?"

"Your father."

The girl had left the room and Percy took up another subject.

"Mother, are you ill? you look so very, very delicate, so pale and thin."

It was no new fear that he suggested to Matilda. Perpetual struggles against poverty had well nigh worn her out, and in her heart there was a gnawing fear, a never-dwelling regret, which helped to take away her strength.

For herself the world held little pleasures, but where would the promoter of companies be without her wifely care? Who would watch over Doll and Val?

Besides, and oh, that was worst of all, when she crossed the rubicon that divided time from eternity, where would she be?

As a girl, she had not been irreligious; she had read the Bible every day, and gone to church on Sundays, but after she married the perpetual troubles had filled her mind with the things of this world. She had lived for her husband and children, not for love of Heaven. She dared not think of her falling health; she dared not think of the great hereafter; long forgotten she rose up and filled her mind with dread. Of one especially the memory was rarely absent, it haunted her almost like a ghost.

The "green-room," as the apartment at the "Nymphs' Resort" in which the artists assembled was proudly called, was of a moderate size and comfortably furnished.

On the evening when Ada Loville visited the Grubbingtons, several of the so-called "notables" were present, coolly discussing their own affairs, their companies and things in general.

The tired conjurer (his performance being over) had subsided into his private attire, a suit of rusty black, the hint his small meagre and large family permitted him to afford. He stood talking familiarly to the chief contralto, Madame Mousellin, a fine majestic woman, who had been handsome once, but was sadly passed now; in a remote corner a mild flirtation was being carried on between the serio comic Annie Ball and a young tenor; she being about to charm the audience with "Mary's young man," wore a housemaid's dress, very short and very low; her fashionably dressed hair was crowned by an imitation cap. She was very pretty and her companion knew it, so they too were happy in each other's society.

The room was tolerably full, for most of the company were present, and some had brought a friend with them; one of these visitors joined himself to Mr. Doem, and entered into conversation with that great genius.

"Who is on now, Doem?" with a friendly pat on the shoulder.

"Johnny Gripps—serio comic—immense favourite—double encore—house all crammed."

It was Mr. Doem's regular custom to divide his sentences into fragments, and fire them off in separate shots; not that he ever paused for lack of words; oh, no, but he feared the depth of talent contained in a whole sentence might be too much for his listeners.

He was a very considerate man.

"What a time since you've been here, Mr. Doem," called out Annie Ball. It was beyond that young lady's power to see a man and not make an

attempt to flirt with him; perhaps, too, she wanted to make the young tenor jealous.

"I've been too busy, Annie," said her Christlike name, a privilege somewhat freely exercised by the gentlemen who visited the "Nymphs' Resort." "What about, secrets?"

"Perhaps, how are you going on here?"

"Very slow, very stupid; I'm coming to the conclusion everything is stupid!"

Madame Mousellin laughed, and said in a loud whisper:

"Annie's cross, she's lost her place."

Annie turned away to the tenor's kind consolation. She muttered that she wished "people would be quiet and mind their own business."

"She don't like playing secondiddle," retorted Mousellin, as Madame's admirers often styled her.

"I don't care," muttered Annie. "I am as good as she is. I can't think what people can see in her, the nasty, disagreeable thing."

"So you've hated the yellow flag. Who's your rival, Annie?"

"Ada Loville."

A diversion here ensued, caused by the entrance of Johnny Gripps. One of the acknowledged leaders of the small community, he was in the costume of a ragged Irishman, which just suited his shambling walk. When he had taken a seat and exchanged greetings with his friends, the irrepressible Annie broke forth again.

"Ada Loville's not come yet; she'll never be in time."

"She always is," said Johnny, shortly.

"The ladies have been abusing Miss Loville, nineteen to the dozen, Johnny," interposed Duffem. "Now I come to you as an impartial judge, what's the verdict?"

"Yaw, she's a nice little girl enough—rather high; and mighty, perhaps; she draws too. Of course, the people come to see me, still a good many of 'em stop till she's off. Ah, you should have heard 'em cheer me to-night; it was quite affecting, really."

"What did you sing?"

Conceit was Johnny's weak point, the company knew it and played upon it most unmercifully.

"The Irish Wake."

"Bravo, old fellow, did you really? I wish I'd known it, I'd have come in front."

"Ah, great pity, you lost a treat. You should just have heard 'em clap, I really thought they'd have torn the benches up," said Johnny, modestly.

"Of course you want on again?"

"Oh, yes; great nuisance, you know, but I was obliged to; couldn't disappoint 'em so, really now."

"Clever boy—great favourite—public pet," cried the conjurer, approvingly.

"Who's on now?"

"Minnie Vaughan."

"Poor little Minnie! it's really too hard on her to come just after me. Can't expect the people to listen to her, can't, really now," said Johnny, pityingly.

"Hush, who's that?" as the rustling of a silken skirt was heard.

"Miss Loville, perhaps," suggested Duffem.

"How can you rub her of her titles?" enquired Annie Ball, maliciously. "why don't you say 'The Fair Northern Limer'?"

Her words were hardly uttered when the door opened and our heroine entered.

She wore a flowing dress of gray silk, trimmed here and there with soft filmy lace, pink roses were twisted in her hair, a bunch of the same flowers was fastened to her waist; very, very beautiful she looked.

It was not wonderful that Annie Ball had cause for jealousy.

Johnny Gripps came forward to place the new comer's chair by the fire. Mr. Doem congratulated her of her last night's success; even the young tenor deserted to her side, and Madame Mousellin greeted her with quiet respect.

Ida Colville responded to their courtesy with the easy grace that never failed her, but her sentences were few and far between, and soon the sound of distant cheers proclaimed that the last performer had finished and Miss Loville's presence was required by the crowd. Her sweet voice had now so often held spell abrid.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. CUFFINS sat in the little back parlour one January evening, feeling remarkably discontented. She generally felt so, but on this occasion she had a particular grievance over which to brood.

Mr. Honeyman, faithless and most offending of grocers, had not been near her for a whole week—for seven days had she been deprived of the sweetness of his presence—and although she had saved several pence that would have been otherwise in-

vested in petticoats, she was base enough not to feel grateful for this signal good fortune.

Rumour reported that Mr. Honeyman was paying addresses to Miss Pippa, the daughter of a neighbouring greengrocer, and the fair milliner was furious at the bare idea.

"Did he think," she muttered, "that she, the object of the late Jeremiah Cuffins was to be played with in such a fashion. Perfidious traitor! Surely he would be recompensed for his wickedness, by the misfortune of losing the inestimable treasure she would have proved herself to be."

But Mrs. C. felt extremely merciful. She really would have preferred for him to enjoy the treasure, than to deprive him of it, so she was on the point of despatching Bella with a message, inviting him to supper, when the sound of a suppressed chuckle met her ear, which she knew could proceed from no other than the fickle grocer.

Was there ever a woman without a spice of jealousy in her nature?

If so she must be a phenomenon, as rare as a beautiful, and I earnestly desire to make her acquaintance.

At any rate, Mrs. Cuffins possessed not one spice, but many, and when she heard that low, prolonged chuckle, and remembered that she had left Bella Grey alone in the shop, she quietly slipped off her boots, noiselessly opened the door, and with a step more resembling that of a cat than a human being, reached a dark corner behind the counter, where, crouching down, she could hear all that went on, and yet remain invisible.

Do not think I wish to ridicule the noblest passion of our nature—love.

I respect and honour true love in any shape or form. It is a mighty power, a wondrous benefactor. It can change misery to joy, can soften every bitter load, lighten each trouble, and glid even the bed of death with peace.

You tell me, perhaps, that love brings many troubles, that if unrequited, it is referred as worthless, it wrecks its owner's life; that even if valued and appreciated, it makes us cling too closely to its object, so closely, that if we cease to love them there is an aching void within us, never to be filled.

It may be so with some affection, but not with true love. To be worth the name it must be unselfish, it must be faithful, strong and deep. And would such a passion often fix itself on an unworthy object, and even if so, would not its influence be sufficient to

"Allure to brighter worlds."

In the annals of our country many an incident is related of great men whose lives were marred or clouded through love, but there also we read of still more numerous characters strengthened and purified, encouraged and in the right, led onwards, ever onwards by passion.

But while I thus respect the master-passion of our race, I despise the maudlin sentimentality which often passes current for it. I detest it as something false and weak, derogatory alike to speaker and listener.

But to return to our tale.

Mr. Honeyman, dressed as we have described him once before, and holding in one hand a little paper bag, was perched on one of the high, uncomfortable stools on which Mrs. Cuffins' customers were wont to rest themselves.

It was growing late; Bella had carefully put away the stock-in-trade, and the door being shut, she sat opposite Mr. Honeyman, to whom she presented perhaps as great a contrast as could be imagined.

Privately she was wishing he would go home, or else adjourn to the parlour, but he did neither. There he sat on his uncomfortable chair, with his legs dangling in mid air.

He never spoke, but he stared perpetually at Bella, and every now and then gave vent to one of the long chuckles that had reached the ears of Mrs. Cuffins.

This state of things lasted quite five minutes after the widow had taken up her post of spy. At last he gathered courage.

He opened the small bag, and selected a particularly bilious-looking sweetmeat.

"Have one?"

Bella took it, but she made no attempt to eat it, but laid it on her lap.

Mr. Honeyman watched this action with great eagerness.

He then leant forward, to the imminent danger of his whole body, and asked in a loud whisper:

"How's the old gal?"

The idea that she was meant by this elegant title never struck Mrs. Cuffins.

Why should it?

She was only—I really must not betray confidence, but she was quite youthful still, or thought so.

Bella prudently pretended not to understand.

Mr. Honeyman somewhat varied his inquiry:

"Why, Mother Cuffins, to be sure!"
Oh, how the matron's blood boiled! Never, never would she treat that wretch to periwinkles again. As to Bella, she should go on the spot.

"Mrs. Cuffins is pretty well."
"What a queer old thing she is?"
Bella was not perfection, and she agreed so fully with this remark that she could not find it in her heart to reprove the speaker. She only raised one finger, and said, warningly:

"Hush!"
"Why?"
"Mrs. Cuffins might hear."
"Let her," said Mr. Honeyman, with astounding bravery. "It's the right of a true Briton to speak his mind, and I think her a regular old cat, and I don't mind how soon she knows it."
"But I thought you liked her?" put in Bella, quietly.

"Liked her. Ha! ha! ha! that's a good un. Why I'd as soon like sour currants. Ha! ha! ha!"
And he laughed till his face grew almost purple with the exertion.

"But she thinks so, too," said Bella, rashly.
"On course she does. I meant her to. She thinks I'm going to make her Mrs. Honeyman. Ha! ha! ha! Fancy marrying a woman old enough to be my mother!"—(perfidious man, what a slander!)—"A ugly, mincing creature with not a good look about her."

He stared at Bella for a few minutes, and then resumed:

"Now when I marrys, miss, it'll be quite a different sort o' gal, quite."

"Indeed?"
"Black eyes, miss; I like black eyes when they comes natural. Excuse the joke, miss. Ha! ha! ha! I really couldn't help it."

Not having perceived in what the joke consisted, Bella granted the pardon immediately.

"I'm not a poor man, miss. I don't mind telling you. I've a tidy bit of money in the bank, and my business is snug. Mrs. Honeyman won't have no cause to grumble."

"No."
"And myself, miss—well, I always was modest—when I was a boy I used to be called 'the modest youth of Islington Green'—so I'll only say, miss, as I think she might go farther and fare worse."
"Who?"

Bella had let her attention wander. Intent upon the question as to how she was to make her escape she had paid little heed to her companion, and now she had no answer ready.

"Now, that's a good un. Can't you guess, miss? Come now, try."

"I never guessed anything."
"Come, miss, try now then; it's never too late to mend, as the parson told me when I said I'd never been inside of a church. Black eyes," he prompted, seeing she made no attempt at guessing, "black eyes. Come, miss."

"Give it up," in despair of silencing him.
Mr. Honeyman dropped the paper bag and came a little closer.

"A nice snug business, little to do, plenty to eat, a good, kind soul like myself to look after. Don't you think that a pleasant life, miss? I'm a plain man, and, being so very modest, I won't say any more about myself, only I'll take real good care on you if you'll have me."

Bella Grey had certainly never thought of such a proposal. It was not the offer she had dreamed of. No tale of love and romance, only prosy common-places.

She did not like the grocer, and she commenced an unhesitating refusal, when something came whirling past her and struck Mr. Honeyman a smart blow on the ear.

(To be Continued.)

NO SECRETS.

THE moment a girl has a secret from her mother, or has received a letter she dare not let her mother read, or has a friend of whom her mother does not know, she is in danger.

A secret is not a good thing for a girl to have. The fewer secrets that lie in the hearts of women at any age, the better.

It is almost a test of purity. She who has none of her own is best and happiest.

In girlhood, hide nothing from your mother; do nothing that, if discovered by your father, would make you blush. When you are married, never, never, never conceal anything from your husband.

Never allow yourself to write a letter that he may not know all about, or to receive one that you are not quite willing he should read.

Have no mysteries whatever. Tell those who are about you where you go and what you do. Those

who have the right to know, I mean, of course.

A little secretiveness has set many a scandal afloat; and much as is said about women who tell too much, they are much better off than women who tell too little.

A man may be reticent and lie under no suspicion; not so a woman.

The girl who frankly says to her mother: "I have been here. I met so and so. Such and such remarks were made, and this or that was done," will be certain of receiving good advice and sympathy. If all was right, no fault will be found. If the mother knows out of her greater experience that something was improper, or unsuitable, she will, if she is a good mother, kindly advise against its repetition.

It is only when mothers discover that their girls are hiding things from them that they rebuke or scold.

You can't be blamed for making little mistakes, but you will never do anything very wrong if from the first you have no secrets from your mother.

M. K. D.

FROM THE DEAR, OLD HOME.

The seasons come, the seasons go,
Change is the lot all mortals know;
One day, beneath this roof is home.
The next one, far away we roam.

To-night we watch the embers' glow,—
Dim shadows flitting to and fro,—
And say, "The days, now past and gone,
Were sweetest the sun e'er shone upon."

For we have lived in this dear old place,
So long, we cling to its embrace;
And what we've joyed and suffered here
Make e'en the empty rooms seem dear.

Aye, husband, here the lassies came,
And the boy I call by your lov'd name;
While the babe we could so illy spare
From here went up the golden stair.

Another left us when she wed;
And anon we missed a silver head;
A bridal wreath and a saintly crown!
Youth takes the burden Age lays down!

Our household goods we send away,
And after them our feet must stray;
But our longing eyes with tears will fill
As our souls to Home's sweet memories thrill.

There father sat; dear mother here;
Here stood the cradle; there the bier!
Bring back, bring back my treasures; Oh!
I cannot, cannot, will not go!

The children call—leave the table there;
Set close by the hearth dear grandma's chair!

Again, set the cradle a-near the wall,
And over all, let home's sunshine fall!

All, all is vain; the sunny head
The grave hides, needs no cradle-bed!
And Age scarce leaves an "old arm-chair,"

Ere we, in turn, are sitting there!

There is no charm, by which we bring
To Winter the hue of magic Spring!
And the hour that coins life's dearest
prize
Is the hour that nearest to us lies!

From every place some good they miss,
Who've left on clay-cold lips love's kiss!
And every spot is home that knows
A household's joy, or household woes!

This dear, old house, to-day we leave,
And for the new bright fancies weave;
If it prove one half as dear as this,
We'll win our share of earthly bliss.

And when, in sober, after years,
We judge of life by its smiles and tears,
Of Memory's pictures, brightest, best,
Let this one e'er out-rank the rest.

L. S. U.

THE WHALE AND THE SALAMANDER.—A salamander who hoped to strike oil went to the brink of the ocean during a shower and earnestly implored a whale to come in out of the wet. "Thanks," replied the courteous cetacean, "but I should feel entirely out of my element in your society." Moral.—The above teaches us the propriety of being contented with our lot.

THE DRAMA.

PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE.

THERE is happily no necessity for breaking a lance in defence of British acting. These may not be great days, but, without pausing to enumerate artists who, were it possible to bring them together, would constitute such a company as had never been seen under one roof, let us advise the rabid admirer of French art, and therefore the impatient doubter of English, to see the second act of "Ours" at this theatre.

We doubt whether anything more admirable, except perhaps "Sweethearts," at the same house, has been seen by the present generation of playgoers. From the rising to the falling of the curtain on this remarkable act, the eye and ear are gratified and the heart moved by a display of art that is at once subtle, intense, and largely beautiful. It is after witnessing acting of this description that one longs for the pen of a Hazlitt or a Lamb to keep its memory green.

MR. HOLLINGSHEAD's short occupancy of the Charing Cross Theatre has terminated, and Mr. Field resumes his management of this house with a comic tragedy in three acts, entitled "My Niece and My Monkey," which will be produced for the first time, and under the direction of Mr. H. Horman.

RECENT visitors to the Zoological Gardens have been hopelessly perplexed in their efforts to find amongst the Prince of Wales's collection of birds and beasts a brace of tigers that answer to the names of "Moody" and "Sankey." We are credibly informed that the offending names have been temporarily obliterated by means of a strip of pious canvas.

AT the Balfie National Festival at the Alexandra Palace, Saturday, July 29th, the chief features of the entertainment will be the concert, which will last from three till five, and the ever-popular "Bohemian Girl," which will last from six till nine, and will be followed by a grand display of fireworks, to last from 9.0 till 9.30. Madame Christine Nilsson, who will, on this occasion, make her first appearance at the Alexandra Palace, and who delays her departure to the Continent in order to give her gratuitous services, will take part in the concert. Mr. Sims Reeves and other distinguished artists will also assist, and the concert will be conducted by Mr. Carl Rosa, the Arline will be Miss Rose Hersee; the Count Arnheim will be Mr. F. H. Celli, whose success in that character during the last London season of the Carl Rosa Opera Company we recorded at the time; and the Thaddens will probably be Mr. F. Packard, the principal tenor of the C.R. Company. Mr. Frederick Archer will play a Balfie selection on the great organ, and will assist at the concert.

AT St. George's Hall, a new piece by Mr. Gilbert A'Beckett, "The Wicked Duke," has been produced. The plot turns mainly on the attempts of two actresses and an aspiring poet, who are ruralising in Brittany, to rehearse a seven-act tragedy which they are going to play for a charity. The rehearsal is overheard by a maiden aunt and a jealous lover, and, of course, causes serious misunderstandings. Mrs. German Reed plays with her usual spirit a spinster of blighted affections, and Mr. A. Bishop, as the gay deceiver grown old, gives a finished portrait of an ancient beau. Mr. A. Reed, as a despairing lover with a passion for acting detective, extracts considerable fun out of his various disguises, while Misses Holland and Braham and Mr. Corny Grain act and sing with undagging energy. Mr. Corny Grain's sketch of "A Musical Bee" is a clever skit on the "bee" mania, and affords him an opportunity for hits at amateur vocalists, and imitations of well-known singers, from Ethiopian minstrels to Tyrolean joddlers.

MR. BUCKSTONE's benefit at Drury Lane proved a striking success, though not more so than might have been anticipated from the great personal popularity of Mr. Buckstone, and the respect felt for his talents both as an actor and an author—not to speak of his long and honourable management of the Haymarket Theatre. A charge of two guineas for a stall might under ordinary circumstances be said to amount to a prohibitory duty, but it was certainly not so on this occasion. The vast theatre was filled and no less a sum than twelve hundred pounds by way of clear gain is said to have been secured. Of course a performance of the "School for Scandal" including in the cast the most eminent actors and actresses in London was in itself a powerful attraction; as was the chance of hearing Mrs. Keeley, who has long retired from the stage, speak the graceful and pointed lines of Mr. Byron, and Mr. Buckstone deliver his reply.



[MR. STRAPS UNFOLDS HIS SCHEME.]

VINCENT LUTTREL; OR, FRIENDSHIP BETRAYED.

By the Author of "Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"I SHALL not sign any paper for aught you can threaten or do, Vincent Luttrel," said Hugh Denton, endeavouring to assume a firmness he did not feel.

"Good, very good," laughed Luttrel. "I have here"—and he took a tape-tied parcel from his breast-pocket—"I have here, fully drawn, the affidavit which sets forth minutely the particulars of the murder."

"Which was not a murder," faltered Hugh Denton.

"Ha! ha! capital, my shaky casuist. You defy me and argue with me, do you? I have four cartridges in this pistol"—and he produced a neat Colt's six-chamber—"then facts in this affidavit, yet as the last you will find the more deadly weapon, perhaps you may defy a preliminary dose of the first?"

He placed his right thumb on the hammer and "set" the No. 1 chamber.

Hugh Denton watched his movements closely but calmly.

"I am not a coward, Luttrel," said he, coolly. "You can fire; it would be a release."

Vincent Luttrel saw he had made an utter mistake. Hugh Denton was mentally, not personally afraid.

He tried to make a jest of the production of the pistol.

"You are so ready to misunderstand whatever I do and say, Hugh Denton, that I hardly know how to deal with you. Do you understand? I want your name for one thousand pounds, and never again, and I will keep my word, shall you see Vincent Luttrel or hear his voice."

"Can I believe you?"

"You can, and shall never see me again."

"I will do it," said Hugh Denton.

Vincent Luttrel sat down opposite to him at the little table, laid the revolver by his right hand, put the blotter and paper before him, and Hugh Denton proceeded to write the order.

"Villain and traitor!" exclaimed Lionel Pomfret,

darting upon Luttrel at the instant that Hugh Denton, having written the order for payment, was blotting it and about to hand it to his persecutor.

Vincent Luttrel started to his feet, but was seized by the throat with the gripe of a Hercules.

He had only time, by a sudden movement, to seize his little ivory-stocked revolver from the table and make a futile effort at resistance, when, with the skill of a Devon wrestler, Lionel Pomfret, adding the weight of his body to the impetus, brought him down with a crash by the "back heel."

And a crash it was, though the fall would have been far worse for Luttrel but for the interposition of a strong-made occasional table, loaded with Sevres and Chelsea china, a large turquoise majolica card-table, some eggshell Japanese nick-nackeries, and all sorts of bric-a-brac.

Though of excellent oak, and with many stays and cross-pieces, the table could not resist such a weighty strain; it gave way, and mingled its own hard-wood splinters with the more valuable fragments of pistol-ware.

The terrific crash brought not only the servant girl but Isabel to the scene, in time to witness Luttrel, who was gasping and writhing under the grasp of his antagonist, but spoke not a word, fire his revolver into the right fore-arm of Lionel Pomfret, whose hold almost instantaneously relaxed.

He, nevertheless, seized his man with his left hand, but Luttrel rolled over, released himself, sprang to his feet, and by the time Lionel Pomfret was on his legs dashed through the open window. The wounded man followed him in hot pursuit.

Lionel's heart was good, but the wound inflicted by the conical bullet from the insignificant toy-looking pistol had disabled her.

That little firearm was of great potency for mischief. The hardened lead from the rifled barrel had screwed its way up Lionel's fore-arm nearly in a line, fracturing the radius and wounding an artery.

After a furious effort to leap a small dyke and top a fence, over which the pursued had lightly vaulted, the brave young fellow sank fainting on the hither-side of the bank, while Luttrel disappeared in the gloom.

Isabel was quickly at his side, and shortly afterwards Hugh Denton and the terrified servant-girl.

The nearest surgeon was called, but in the meantime Isabel, assisted by her father, had placed pledgets of fine linen and strong bandages round the wounded limb.

A neighbour who also arrived volunteered to con-

tinue the pursuit, but this was vetoed as utterly useless.

The appearance of Lionel Pomfret is easily explained.

He had come home with Isabel, at the request of his betrothed, Isabel having been immensely busy all day in the multitudinous preparations.

The servant girl was not unaware of the mysterious visitor's presence, and from absolute fear, was standing out in the road, awaiting her young mistress's return. She was delighted at the arrival of the athletic bridegroom, and ushered him in gleefully. Hence there was no warning given of his approach.

The surgeon came in half an hour, and, having ascertained the extent of the injury, used every effort to stop the bleeding, but was unable to do so until he had extemporised a sort of tourniquet.

The excessive loss of blood, followed by utter prostration and syncope, so alarmed Isabel and her father that the latter was with difficulty prevented from setting out for the Hall, to bring with him further medical assistance; but, as the neighbour already mentioned was more active, and, what is more, most anxious to serve them, as well as desirous of a legitimate opportunity for paying a visit to the great house, he was deputed to the mission.

Dire was the consternation of Sir Herbert and Lady Dorrington at the intelligence brought by Mr. Selby, for that was the name of Hugh Denton's next neighbour.

But the heaviest blow was the confirmation of their worst suspicions by the information that the possible murderer of their child's bridegroom was their son's friend, Vincent Luttrel, whom they thought to be still with Jasper in Paris.

At first they refused to believe in this part of the story, but Mr. Selby assured them that not only Lionel Pomfret but Mr. Denton and his daughter had both ample opportunity of identifying the assassin, for so Mr. Selby insisted upon calling him.

Sir Herbert was quickly ready for the journey, and, with a promise to bring back the sufferer if he could possibly be moved, he entered the capacious family carriage, driven by the family coachman, and drawn by a stout pair of Clevelandas, with a stalwart footman also on the box, and, with Mr. Selby and the family physician, was soon on the road to Rosemead.

Ether, brandy, and an effervescent draught and a stoppage of the hemorrhage had restored the pulse of Lionel Pomfret, though his weakness was extreme.

The doctor, as the patient earnestly desired it and

the wound was not one which forbade locomotion by a carriage, consented to Lionel's returning with the baronet to the Hall, on account also of the superior attendance that could be there given.

Lionel, semi-recumbent on a number of pillows, his well-banded arm in a cradle of splints, accompanied by Sir Herbert and his medico, was carried over at a little before midnight to Dorrington Hall.

He was met by his surprised and terrified father, for Sir Piers had been absent when Mr. Selby arrived.

But the person most astonished and incredulous was Jasper Dorrington, who, with Mr. Straps, had just reached home by post-chaise from the station as Sir Herbert and Dr. Wilmont had set out for Rosemead.

Mr. Straps was "prepared to swear before any justice that Mr. Vincent Luttrell was staying in Paris for several days on particular business, and, more than that, he (Mr. Straps) had seen with his own eyes Mr. Luttrell's luggage all left in his room the very night afore, when he and master left Paris by the night express. Besides, they'd lost no time on the road, and, unless Mr. Luttrell could be in two places at once, he could not be at Rosemead and in Paris at the same time. Depend on't, gentlemen," said he, "it's a case of mistaken identity, and perhaps somebody very like Mr. Luttrell has done it, but I'll swear it isn't my young master's friend, whatever else he may have to answer for."

Such was Mr. Straps' passionately expressed opinion, an opinion which gave rise to all sorts of conjectures, some extremely wild and improbable.

In the servants' hall an opinion of a "double" or "fotch" of Mr. Luttrell gained ground, and some wonderfully authenticated stories of men hung by mistake for murders, whom the victims or the real murderer appeared afterwards to prove the fatal blunder in evidence and the law were gravely told, and made somehow to fit the present occasion.

One perplexity sorely troubled Sir Herbert and his good wife. It was how, in the morning, to break the sad news to the bride-elect.

Here the doctor stepped in with a suggestion which might save alarm, and the telling of a "white untruth," the burden of which he would take upon himself.

His proposal was that he should, at an early hour, visit Alice, and, in as delicate a manner as possible, announce a slight accident with firearms as having befallen her lover. Meanwhile Lionel Pomfret should be prepared for a visit from his intended, and, as the wound, though severe, did not affect any important organ, and the outward appearance of the patient would indicate no more than an injury to the right hand, the plausibility of a postponement of the wedding ceremony on account of the inability of the bridegroom to place the ring on the bride's finger, to say nothing of the malaise of his wound, must be the assigned reason for the delay.

And now came on a conseil de famille, in which Sir Herbert, his lady, their son, Piers Pomfret, and Dr. Wilmont were the debaters.

In it, for it was assumed, despite the suggested doubts of Jasper, that Vincent Luttrell was the perpetrator of the deed, the prosecution of the villain was resolved on.

Sir Piers proposed to offer a reward of five hundred pounds, and Sir Herbert declared he would supplement it by another hundred, for the apprehension of Vincent Luttrell.

Mr. Straps heard a rumour of these intentions in the servants' hall, and thereupon hastened down to the rectory, where he informed Martha Miller of his intention to earn that money, and thereupon to make her Mrs. Straps without further delay.

Martha Miller heard him with attention and first gave him her opinion as to Paris, foreign manners and morals in general, and of Mr. Vincent Luttrell in particular, with great positiveness. And then added that as to Mr. Straps ever touching the reward for apprehending Mr. Luttrell, she thought it disgraceful even to think of it.

"Let them that gets their living by blood-money get it. It's their trade; but it isn't yours, Mr. Straps, nor shan't be if I know it."

Mr. Straps used the usual argument, that if he didn't have the reward somebody else would, that he was interested, and so was everybody else, in catching and convicting a murderer, but Martha Miller would not, and therefore could not, see it. Finally Mr. Straps gave up the controversy, but still adhered to the idea of getting the five hundred pounds reward. He resolved upon a last push to bring over Martha to his side, and this time he succeeded.

"Martha," said he, mysteriously, "I had hoped not to be obliged to tell you of a remarkable adventure I've had in Paris this last time. If this Mr. Luttrell isn't a murderer already it isn't his fault by no means."

Martha Miller listened eagerly.

"Well, you see, some twenty years ago, when he was a very wild young man, he makes old Mr. Denton up here horn-mad and jealous about a little woman he had for a wife at that time, and he accuses her of being two-faced with a Captain Fitzgerald. Well, Mr. Denton waylays this Captain Fitzgerald on the seashore and challenges him to fight, there and then. Isabel's father collars this Captain Fitzgerald, who upsets him, when off goes his pistol and shoots the captain. Well, he goes insane, and this fine Mr. Luttrell and Mr. Denton—you wouldn't think it of him, I'm sure—tops the man over the rocks into the sea."

Here Mr. Straps applied himself to a mug of ale which Martha had drawn, by permission, for his refreshment.

"You're not a romancing, I hope," suggested the cautious Martha.

"Not likely. It's all true. I heard it from the captain himself."

"What! from the man that was shot dead and then thrown into the sea? I did not think you could be imposed on by such stories, and still less that you would have the impudence to tell them to me."

"It's gospel truth, though, Martha, and the captain is now alive and in Paris. I had all this from his own lips. This Mr. Luttrell has been robbing Mr. Denton ever since; and going to 'peach upon him,' and now, though I can't think it's him as has done this, he deserves to be hanged for a sight of other things, let alone plundering and swindling of my master at Epsom and Doncaster and other places, as I now know well."

"Don't think I'm against your bringing such a villain to justice, Mr. Straps, far from it. It's only making yourself a professional thief-taker for hire, as one might say, that I objected to."

Having thus far succeeded in convincing Martha to his project, Mr. Straps opened out to her his plans.

"If so be," said he, "this bit of work is really done by Mr. Luttrell, he'll bolt back to France as fast as he can, and as I know the hotel and the place where his baggage and a sight of things of his are stowed away, why, he'll go back there after them, and then I'll have the French police on the look-out, and grab him, Martha, as safe as he's a born villain."

Martha Miller no longer opposed her lover's plan, and just as the family council we have spoken of was about to break up, Mr. Straps presented himself before them; his plan was approved, and, though Jasper Dorrington was still unable to reconcile the presence of Luttrell in England with what he, confirmed by Straps, conceived to be an impossibility, he gave in, and relying on Straps' ingenuity and readiness of resource, that person was dispatched for Paris, and set out with alacrity for that city, amply furnished with "the needful," and backed by letters to the French police authorities, to assist him in his quest for a suspected murderer.

But the cleverest of people are often wide of the mark in their conjectures.

Vincent Luttrell was not the man to be daunted by difficulties, or appalled by the failure of one scheme.

He had always kept himself prepared for the worst, if his hold upon Hugh Denton should be broken by any untoward circumstances.

He had spoken of his affidavit, which he kept drawn out, but of course unused, in which he gave his own artful version of the tragical event at Torquay.

This he now resolved to place before the authorities at Scotland Yard, and thus turn the tables, as he hoped, upon his opponents.

A criminal indictment would close the mouth of Hugh Denton, as to his extortion of money, of which too he flattered himself there existed no producible evidence.

There was no more to be got by concealment; but a thirst for retaliation, a rage at the escape of his victim, and serious desire to wreak his vengeance on Lionel Pomfret took possession of his whole soul.

He feared not consequences if this could be gratified, and every evil passion of his vile nature prompted him to carry out his plan.

His disguise served him well, and inquiries at the railway station on the following day failed to give the least trace of any gentleman who could be supposed to resemble the elegant Vincent Luttrell having left by that conveyance.

Five third-class tickets, three seconds, and one first were, as the inquirers and clerk thought, pretty clearly accounted for; the first-class passenger being a well-known gentleman, the three seconds being a lady and two children, and of course, of the five thirds, half-a-dozen people were ready to testify that nobody like Mr. Vincent Luttrell was among them.

Nevertheless he was, as we shall presently see.

Mr. Inspector Foxcraft sat in the office in Scotland Yard in deep confab with another chief of the detective department.

The subject of their discussion was the unaccountable disappearance of some thousand pounds' worth of diamonds, the property of a well-known countess, from a railway station, whence they diverged to a yet more mysterious murder of a woman whose maid, unidentified, lay at a Lambeth mortuary awaiting the verdict of a twice-adjourned coroner's inquest.

A gentleman sent in his card.

"Show him in, Ninety-four," said Mr. Foxcraft. Vincent Luttrell entered.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said he. "I have come to give some information and to ask your advice as to my course of proceeding in a matter in which I am not myself altogether guiltless."

The two detectives pricked up their ears.

"My conscience," continued Luttrell, in a melancholy tone, "has long been disquieted with the burden of my participation in a murder—yes, a murder—in which I was the unwilling witness, and afterwards the accomplice by concealment, to shield and save the man who committed it. But now my remorse has overcome all other feelings, and I propose to make what atonement I can to society and the law by a full confession, whatever it may cost me to do so."

"Right," said Mr. Foxcraft; "but I must warn you against telling us anything, as we are bound to disclose to the authorities what we may hear, and it may be used against you as evidence."

"I know it, but that will not deter me. I offer my evidence—evidence that will criminate myself, with a full desire to accept the consequences," continued he—a formal affidavit, drawn long since, in which every particular is detailed, but until this moment I have never mustered courage to swear it."

While Luttrell thus spoke, he was not at all surprised to see Mr. Foxcraft's companion slide out of the room and return with something in his hand, leaving the door ajar on his re-entrance.

"Will you oblige me with your name?" said Mr. Foxcraft, dryly.

"It is on that card," replied Vincent Luttrell.

"Oh, ay; and your address?"

"No,—, Albany, Piccadilly; but last from Paris."

"Good: it is my unpleasant duty, Mr. Luttrell, to inform you that you may consider yourself in custody, on your own confession, as accessory to a murder. It is not for us, sir, to ask you for particulars—those we will endeavour to find out for ourselves." Mr. Foxcraft gave a sign and a constable in private clothes entered.

"Just search this gentleman for arms, and anything he may have about him," said the inspector. "He is in your custody for the present."

Vincent Luttrell smiled.

He laid the small revolver on the desk, which Mr. Foxcraft at once secured, then submitted placidly to the search.

His pocket-book, purse, and card-case were returned to him, and Mr. Foxcraft politely apologised for what he again called "his necessary but unpleasant duty."

"And now, Mr. Luttrell, I must take you, and this paper, at once before the sitting magistrate at Bow Street. He will deal with the matter, our duty being merely to hold you safely should he think proper to order a remand."

A cab was called, the constable got on the box with the driver, and with Mr. Foxcraft and Vincent Luttrell inside, it soon drew up at the dingy door of the chief police office.

The prisoner's arrival was eagerly scanned by a small group of ragged urchins and dirty, dissipated looking women, and Vincent being shown into the magistrate's private room awaited the completion of a case then on.

Mr. Minshull perused the fairly written document with serious attention.

"Tell Mr. Barnaby to step here."

The experienced clerk of the chief office appeared, and the magistrate handed him the document of which we have more than once spoken. It was headed as follows:—

"Statement of Vincent Luttrell in regard to his participation in the concealment of the slaying of one Captain O'Gorman Fitzgerald, by Mr. Hugh Denton, in the presence of the said Vincent Luttrell, near Torquay, on the night of the—day of—, 18—."

Then came a craftily coloured narrative of the well-known occurrences in which Hugh Denton was described as seeking the life of his opponent, and when he declined to fight him, as "shooting him

down," and thereafter, seasoned with sundry expressions of the writer's remorse, disposing of the body in the way already related.

The clerk merely remarked, "And you desire to swear to the state of facts contained in this paper?"

"I do."

"Take this book in your right hand."

Vincent Luttrell did so; and the clerk deliberately read over to him every word of the document.

"This paper contains the truth and nothing but the truth," ending with the usual adjuration, Vincent Luttrell repeating the solemn words, too often lightly repeated, after the functionary.

"Be so good as to sign your deposition."

Luttrell did so.

"Mr. Foxcraft," said the magistrate, "I shall at once issue my warrant for the apprehension of the Mr. Hugh Denton named in this affidavit. You will go down to Devonshire, Mr. Foxcraft, taking with you the prisoner, for I cannot at present admit him to bail, to identify the accused. I need hardly say to a gentleman of your intelligence that, however fairly may be this disclosure, you will be protected from punishment by being made witness for the Crown. At the same time, to ensure your attendance on behalf of the prosecution, you will be held in custody until the trial, unless bailed before a judge in Chambers. I am not called on to express an opinion on the degree of the crime set forth in this affidavit, nor shall I be so, as, in due course, the examination and trial will take place in the county and at the assizes nearest to where the crime was committed."

The magistrate rose and left the room, and Mr. Foxcraft politely fastening to Vincent Luttrell, he and the constable did the same.

That night, watched by a constable, Vincent Luttrell was lodged in one of the barred apartments at Scotland Yard, and in the morning was on route for Rosemead.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BURNING with a fierce desire for revenge, Vincent Luttrell had forgotten for the moment the awkward position in which he would place himself as the accomplice of the man whom he charged with wilful murder.

He was, in fact, by no means easy in his mind as to the result of publicity being given to the case.

That event, he justly feared, might bring to light the damning fact of his, the accused's, knowledge of the existence of the man whose death was the gravamen of the charge he had brought forward after so long a silence.

These disturbing reflections humbled him during the long journey from London, he being, all the way, narrowly watched, and in the close company of a stalwart plain-clothes constable and accompanied by the vigilant Inspector Foxcraft, who, with his comrade and his prisoner, occupied a separate coupe compartment throughout the whole journey.

Vincent Luttrell had informed the inspector (he knew that concealment was useless) of the whole particulars (except his demand of the thousand pounds from Hugh Denton) of his conflict with Lionel Pomfret, which he imputed to a personal quarrel and jealousy.

The astute police agent, seeing nothing improbable in his account, agreed that, as the wounded man might possibly be at Rosemead (Luttrell knew nothing to the contrary), it would be desirable that his presence should not be seen by the parties there when he went to make the arrest.

"Indeed," observed Mr. Foxcraft, "your description, Mr. Luttrell, of the man and the place is so precise and satisfactory that I now think it was quite an unnecessary trouble to have brought you down with me at all, though, as you will be required to give evidence to complete the case for commitment, you will be wanted here. As the caption presents no difficulty Mr. Luttrell, I shall allow you to remain with my officer here at some convenient place in the village while I take the necessary steps for the arrest of Mr. Hugh Denton."

It was late in the afternoon when, in pursuance of this plan, Mr. Inspector Foxcraft knocked at the front door of Rosemead Villa; and in reply to his inquiry for Mr. Denton, was ushered into the well-known little waiting parlour and asked for his name.

"A gentleman from London, who has private business with Mr. Denton."

"Show him in."

At the tea table sat Evelyn Stewart, Isabel, and Hugh Denton.

We need hardly say that the recent tragic occurrence and the critical state of Lionel, though he was fit for real danger, had saddened every face, and produced an unwonted seriousness of tone and manner.

Hugh Denton, according to his usual method of looking at the gloomy side of things, had just been

insisting that his misdeeds and offences were the focus and origin of all these evils, of the dreadful, perhaps fatal wound of Lionel, the postponement and possibly the frustration of his marriage with Alice—a postponement which had also affected that of his beloved daughter and Evelyn.

The latter was combating his friend's self-accusing lamentations, when Mr. Foxcraft entered.

The inspector was naturally a good-hearted man, and notwithstanding the peculiar nature of his calling was loth to inflict unnecessary pain by abrupt harshness.

Singling out the young clergyman, he said:

"Excuse me, reverend sir, but as I presume you are a friend of Mr. Denton's, and as my business is unpleasant, I will say a word or two in private to you if you will permit me?"

"Certainly," replied Evelyn Stewart, rising, and about to leave the room.

"You misunderstand me, sir, I do not intend to leave this room, but desire a word apart."

He took from his breast pocket the London magistrate's warrant, and as they went to the window at the end of the apartment the detective handed this document to Evelyn for perusal, simply saying in an undertone, "there is my authority."

Evelyn Stewart turned pale. His lip quivered, as he endeavoured to whisper to the officer:

"This will kill his daughter. What can be done?"

"Get her away upon some pretence," replied Foxcraft, in the same tone.

"Isabel, my dear," said Evelyn Stewart, suddenly turning round, "I think that we are bound look in at the Hall to-night; at least I must do so."

Isabel certainly looked and felt astonished.

"Yes," he continued, as if perusing the paper he held in his hand, "this is indeed an urgent call. I think, sir, we had better retire and leave you to explain the urgency of your business to Mr. Denton."

He returned the warrant as he spoke.

"Isabel, it will not take you long to prepare for a walk, will it? I have something to explain, and I would wish to see Sir Herbert upon other business before I retire to rest."

"I will get ready in a few moments," said Isabel. And she left the apartment to do so.

"Mr. Denton," said the inspector, the instant Isabel had departed, "there is little time to lose. You are my prisoner on a sworn information, the particulars of which are contained in this warrant. I will wait the departure of your daughter and this gentleman, when you must accompany me in a vehicle I have had by to the town of —, and there, before the stipendiary magistrate, answer to the charges made against you."

Hugh Denton did not blench. Indeed, both Evelyn and the officer were surprised at the coolness of his manner.

"There is no need, sir," said he, addressing Mr. Foxcraft, "to repeat the nature of the charge. It is one of murder, and my accuser is Vincent Luttrell. I have long expected this result, which within the last twenty-four hours I have considered inevitable. My accuser is not the man to be balked of his revenge, and I shall need all my friends' advice and all my friends' help to confront and baffle the malice of my fiendish persecutor, who will at last hound me to the death. I am at your command, sir, but for the sake of mercy conceal this blow from my innocent child, if it be possible."

"That will depend upon your friends more than upon me," replied Mr. Foxcraft.

"Leave that to me and Sir Herbert," said Evelyn Stewart, "and place your trust in Heaven. It cannot be that villain can so triumph, nor shall it if human help can rescue you."

"I believe you, and place my trust above," replied Hugh Denton, resignedly.

At this moment Isabel reappeared, attired for her visit to the Hall.

"Do not inconvenience yourself, I pray you, by returning to Rosemead at a late hour, should you be detained at the Hall," said Hugh Denton.

"Isabel can stay over the night with Alice, and —"

"You will be so lonely, father, that I cannot think of staying all night."

"I had much rather you did, Isabel, I can assure you. Indeed, I must insist that you do not trespass on Mr. Stewart to hurry back here, when his advice and assistance may be so much more wanted elsewhere. For myself, I shall not be lonely. The business on which this gentleman has come may make a serious demand upon my time. Good-bye, Isabel, good-bye, and remember I will not hear of your walking back along this solitary road at a late hour."

Isabel obeyed, though she felt some misgiving, some presentiment of impending calamity.

But she shook it off when, Evelyn offering his arm, she bade adieu to her father and left him in the company of the staid Mr. Foxcraft.

That person, having assured himself of the departure of Evelyn and Isabel, resumed his seat at the writing-table opposite to Hugh Denton.

"Where do you purpose to take me?" asked he.

"To the town of —, and in the morning before the magistrates at the Town Hall. Would you like the assistance of a legal adviser. If you will furnish me with his name I will take care he shall be in attendance at the examination, as well as any immediate friends you may desire. But as the first examination will be merely preliminary and followed by a remand, I should advise all defence and witnesses to be reserved."

"I thank you for your courtesy," replied the prisoner. "I am only anxious to confirm the knowledge of my dreadful position to as few persons as possible. Messrs. Maynard and Claxton are my solicitors, and also those of Sir Herbert Dorrington."

"Sir Herbert is in the commission of the peace," said Mr. Foxcraft, drily, "but the witness, Luttrell, claimed, as he said, for the sake of your family, and the man he has accidentally wounded, to avoid taking the case before him."

"Measureless hypocrite and liar," muttered Hugh Denton, bitterly; "the fiend who has remorselessly drawn my heart's blood, poisoned my life, and brought a withering blight on the fair rose of my innocent child's existence, adds another drop of gall to my cup of bitterness when he pretends to regard the feelings of myself or my child. Yet this last stroke of his malice hurts me not, unless his avowed dart should glance and strike my innocent girl. I will go with you, my friend, cheerfully, and I will leave to the discretion of my beloved friend, our excellent clergyman, the delicate task of accounting for my departure."

Hugh Denton called in the servant, and leaving with her a message for Mr. Stewart and another for Isabel, to the effect that he was under the necessity of accompanying his visitor to town, and requesting them not to be uneasy in case of his non-return for a few days, Hugh Denton donned his outer coat, and assisted by a stout stick, took his way to the carriage which Mr. Foxcraft had left waiting about a hundred yards lower down the road.

As they passed the "Plough and Harrow," Mr. Foxcraft hailed the ostler, whom he desired to tell Mr. Holdfast that he and his friend had gone on to —, where he hoped to see Mr. H. and his friend in the morning not later than ten. The ostler, who had no doubt as to the position of Vincent Luttrell and the fact of Mr. Holdfast being a "peeler," as he termed him, and making a further guess that a robbery or something of the sort would be before their "washups" in the morning, delivered his message with a determination that he too would be over at the Town Hall at ten to hear what had brought down the "two Lunnon crushers."

We shall pass over the preliminary examination of Hugh Denton, which took place as appointed. Mr. Foxcraft handed in Vincent Luttrell's deposition, which was read formally by the magistrate's clerk, and that person again sworn to its truth, but was not cross-examined, Mr. Maynard considering it advisable to say nothing at that stage of the proceedings. Sir Herbert Dorrington and Evelyn Stewart were present, but the former did not take his seat upon the bench as he was entitled to do, and the latter only came forward when the remand for one week was ordered and accompanied, as did Mr. Maynard, his solicitor, the prisoner to the county goal.

As to Vincent Luttrell, he boldly, as the prisoner was being led away, demanded that he might be set at liberty upon his personal recognisances to appear and give evidence for the prosecution. This, however, was peremptorily refused by the bench, with an intimation that, at a later stage of the proceedings, an application might be made to a judge. Accordingly, both accuser and accused that night slept in different apartments under the same roof in the county goal of —shire.

On the morning of the examination at the Town Hall, Mr. Straps arrived in Paris, and straightway made his appearance with his letters at the Bureau de Police; thence, accompanied by a sergeant de ville, he visited the apartment jointly occupied by Vincent Luttrell and his master at the Hotel de Louvre. All there was in statu quo.

Mr. Vincent Luttrell's baggage was undisturbed, and that gentleman had not been seen since he left the hotel on the morning of the day on which Mr. Straps and Jasper Dorrington departed at a much later hour.

More minute inquiries proved that the fugitive, as they considered him, had left Paris by a morning train. Mr. Straps' doubts and surmises, and those of the servants' hall, were thus satisfactorily disposed of.

"The cunning varmint made tracks the moment he thought his little game was blown upon," said he, "and off he went, hot foot, to the old gentleman, a-thinking to marry his daughter and get his money out of hand. Well, that trick's floored, and he's bolted again. Where would he go to but here?"

Mr. Straps sat down and indited with much care and labour two letters. The one was to Martha Miller, the Rectory, Cloverbrook, the other to Jasper Dorrington Esq., Dorrington Hall, —shire.

In them he set forth the reasons he had for believing that, with the aid of the French police, he should soon hit upon the trail of Mr. Luttrell.

With this idea he watched the hotel and every place where he suspected Vincent Luttrell might resort.

On the fourth morning of this vain vigil he received a letter from Cloverbrook, the contents of which we reserve for the next chapter.

(To be continued.)

LILACS.

"THERE is no flower so sweet as the rose," we all say. Perhaps there is not; but, when the first full bunches of lilacs bloom, there is a charm in them that is peculiar to themselves. You cannot, it is true, take one small flower, or even cluster, and admire it as you might a single rose.

To appreciate lilacs, you must have great bunches, fresh and full blown. Then hold them in your hands, press them against your breast, bury your face in them, fill all your senses with the perfume, and then you will be ready, for a while, at least, to vow that there is nothing like the lilac for holding and giving the full sweetness of the new-born spring.

The perfume of the lilac is, somehow, full of tender memories. Hot-house flowers are associated with your recollections of social gatherings, or of festive occasions; with the weddings of mere acquaintances, the receptions of fashionable individuals who cared as little for you as you cared for them, or with the remembrance of the funerals of rich people, at whom strangers gazed unmoved as they lie amid crosses, and crowns, and pyramids of exotics. Even the rose is a little spoiled by going to so many parties; and the florist has got hold of violets; but the lilac is nature's own, and your own yet.

Of what does the lilac set you dreaming, as you hide your face in its great bunches and drink in its perfume? Of childish days in some pleasant garden, where, standing on the green grass, you held out your hands for the bunches your mother broke for you.

R. H.

THE BROWNIES.

A COOK'S STORY.

Old wives' stories, are they? Wait a bit, and I'll tell you what happened to myself. It was when I was twenty years old, and lived as housemaid with Mrs. McWhister, and a hard lady she was to get on with. I must say.

And she drove me night and day, and threatened me with losing my place, if I did this or didn't do that; and forty years ago, girls didn't go skipping about from place to place, as they do now. If a girl lost her place, it was hard to get another. So I did all I could, but at last I was beat out; and I went to bed one night, leaving a great pile of clothes, damped, in the basket, that she'd told me to iron, because I could stand on my feet no longer.

"As well first as last," I said to myself. "I'll have to go sometime," and I fell asleep in a moment, so worn out was I, and knew no more about it until the dawn broke.

Then I wakened, with a kind of start, and it rushed into my mind how I'd left my ironing, and what I should hear about it; and how I should be told to pack my things and go, and what the old mother and father would say about it at home; and I can tell you I crept down stairs in a fright, and hardly dared go in at the kitchen-door—for, try as I might, I could do no more than make the fire and get breakfast before the mistress came down.

But when I got into the room and pushed open the shutter, what did I see?—all the clothes I'd left damped down, ironed as smooth as satin, and hanging on the horse!

Who'd done it I couldn't think, for I knew the mistress was in bed when I went to mine, and there was no one else but master, and I was all of a tremble, and could do nothing but stare and wonder, until, at last, mistress came down in her slippers and wrapper.

"You're late, Jane," said she, looking at me, and

then at the clothes. "But I can't blame you much. I heard you ironing at four o'clock last night, or, rather, this morning."

"Not so late as that, ma'am," says I. "Don't contradict, Jane," says she. "I looked at my watch."

Well, I puzzled and puzzled, but nothing came of puzzling.

Well, Friday night came around, and I went to bed meaning to be up early, and scour and sand the kitchen, as we did in those days.

But when I came down, the sun was not up yet.

There it was done, and more than that, the tins hung scoured on the wall, and the biscuit were made up to rise, and there was half my Saturday's work done.

I was frightened again, for who was there to do it.

Once in a way a person might have played a trick like that, but who'd work this way more than once for fun.

I said nothing to mistress, but I felt queer enough all day; and queerer days and days after, when, no matter how I'd left things, all night, I'd find them done for me in the morning. Done so well too.

Nothing ever forgotten; and I supposed I might have been idle as I pleased to this day, and found all my work done for me when I rose, but for my curiosity.

I could not help feeling that there was something more than natural about it; but all the more I wanted to see what it was.

So one night I went up stairs to bed as usual, leaving everything at sixes and sevens, and then crept down and hid in a long pantry that had a pane of glass in the door to light it by.

There I stood peeping through the pane for an hour; and I'd just made up my mind that nothing would happen that night, when I heard a queer little noise, and saw a queer little light begin to shine, and in a minute more the kitchen seemed to be full of the strangest little men and women.

They were no bigger than three-year old children, and they had very little on, but each of them wore a cap with a little lamp set in it, such as miners wear.

They hurried about from one side to the other, scolding as it seemed, in some strange language, and in a few minutes one was sweeping, another scrubbing, another rubbing the big brass candlesticks, one sorting the clothes for the wash.

Everybody was hard at work, and I saw how it was that I'd been helped so.

These were the Brownies that my grandmother had told me of.

How did I know but that some night they'd bring me a bag of gold?

For if the Brownies take a notion to anyone they'll do anything for them.

And maybe they would, darling, but just at that moment something—I think it was the pepper one of the Brownies was sprinkling into the hash—made me sneeze.

"Achu! achu!" says I, and with the sound every Brownie of them all stopped working.

WOMAN'S HEART.—There is a period in the early life of every true woman, when moral and intellectual growth seems, for the time, to cease. The vacant heart seeks for an occupant. The intellect, having appropriated aliment requisite to the growth of the uncrowned feminine nature, feels the necessity of more intimate companionship with the masculine mind, to start it on its second period of development. Here, at this point, some stand for years, without making a step in advance. Others marry, and astonish, in a few brief years, by their sweet temper, their new beauty, their high accomplishments, and their noble womanhood, those whose blindness led them to suppose they were among the incurably heartless and frivolous.

THE MISSIONARY AND THE TIGER.—As a pious missionary was traveling through the jungle, he chanced to observe a leopard lying under a plantain tree. Being undesirous of intruding on the animal's privacy, he made a wide detour, and was so unfortunate as to encounter beneath a lofty bamboo a tiger. "What do you here?" demanded the fierce animal, in an angry voice. "It is rather I who should ask that question," replied the missionary, "for I left you but a moment since beneath that plantain, and now here you are again, whereas the Scripture expressly teaches you that the leopard cannot change his spots." "It does," replied the tiger, "but I am a creature of quite another stripe." So saying, he sprang upon the missionary and devoured him. Moral—There are exceptions to every general rule.

FAVOURS.

If you want to be happy, never ask a favour. Give as many as you can, and if any are freely offered it is not necessary to be too proud to take them; but never ask for or stand waiting for any.

Who ever asked a favour at the right time? To be refused is a woful stab to one's pride. It is even worse to have a favour granted hesitatingly.

I suppose that out of a hundred who petition for the least thing—if it be even an hour of time—ninety-nine wish, with burning cheeks and aching hearts, that they had not done so.

Don't ask favours of your nearest friends. Do everything for yourself, until you drop, and then if one picks you up, let it be because of his free choice, not from any groan you utter.

But while you can stand, be a soldier. Eat your own crust, rather than feast on another's dainty meats; drink cold water rather than another's wine.

The world is full of people asking favours, and people tired of granting them.

Love or tenderness should never be put aside, when its full hands are stretched toward you; but so few love, so few are tender, that a favour asked is apt to be a cruel millstone around your neck, even if you gain the thing you want by the asking.

M. K. D.

THE OGRE'S CASTLE.

"MAMMA, I am going to drive Fanny to the Ogre's Castle this afternoon."

"Hush, Trudie, you shouldn't give nicknames."

"Mamma, sweet, he'll never know it. Come, Fan, get ready, and I'll tell you the little I know about the Ogre."

About three miles away was a beautiful place called Fern Dale, which was open to all who wished to ramble through the spacious ground. The owner was a Mr. Walbridge.

As the people around never saw him, they were inclined to make a mystery of his keeping himself so secluded.

Early in the afternoon Trudie and her cousin, Fannie Almer, started in the little pony-phæton for their ride.

They drove slowly along, inhaling the spicy odour of the trees and listening to the birds, who seemed trying which should sing the sweetest.

Very soon they came to the massive stone gates which stood hospitably open, and drove in.

The house, at a little distance, was just visible through the trees. It was of pale gray stone, and, winding up to the roof and flinging its arms in every direction, was a magnificent vine of scarlet blossom.

After performing the difficult feat of tying Gipsy, the girls set themselves down on the soft grass.

Trudie drew from the basket a large napkin, and spreading it on the grass, laid on it some luscious pears and white and purple hot-house grapes.

"Trudie, it's like an idyl, this lovely nook, surrounded by these stately trees, and a fairy feast of fruit and Longfellow. Come, you read awhile, and then I'll take my turn."

Trudie took the book and began that sweet home-poem by Longfellow—"The Hanging of the Crane." Her voice was the kind Shakespeare loved in woman, soft and low, and as the smooth measures glided from her lips, the music of the voice added to the music of the poem.

The two girls formed a charming picture.

Trudie's little figure was attired in a dainty walking-suit of two shades of gray, the graveness of which was relieved by the soft, blue facing in the front of her hat.

Her golden hair was fringed in a little tangle of curls over her white forehead.

Fan was a tall, pale girl, with delicate, refined features; but so grave and sedate looking as to make a perfect foil for Trudie's piquant loveliness.

The girls little knew they had an auditor. Behind them, on the other side of the fountain, stood a gentleman looking over.

He had strolled from the house towards the fountain, and hearing the low rhythm of Trudie's voice, had discovered whence it came.

There he stood, listening intently, enjoying the reading, and very careful not to disturb the young invaders of his ferny nook.

"Isn't it lovely, Fan? I do admire Longfellow, don't you?"

"Yes, I should like to see him."

"Say, Fan, I'll tell you who I would like to see."

"Who?"

"Why, the owner of this Paradise, to be sure. Isn't it a shame that so much beauty belongs to an old Ogre?"

"Trudie, what makes you think so strangely of him; have you ever seen him?"

"No; but they say he is deformed and has such a bad temper, that is the reason he keeps himself away from sight."

"But, I think it is very kind of him to allow strangers to go so freely through his beautiful grounds."

"Oh, yes; they say that is on account of his vanity. He likes people to see how rich he is. Every one says so, Fan; so it must be true."

All this time the figure behind the fountain had stood motionless.

It was Mr. Walbridge himself. As the reading ceased he had turned to go away, when the remark Trudie made about the "Ogre," arrested his steps again.

With a laughing face, to whose paleness a flush had arisen, he walked back to his house.

As he walked you could notice a lameness, and that the cane which he carried was certainly for use, not for ornament.

Quite unaware of having been overheard, the girls chattered on, finished their fruit, and then untied Gipsy and started for home.

Fannie Almer after a week more, went back to her home.

At the depot, as she kissed Trudie good-bye, she said:

"If you hear anything more about the Ogre, be sure and let me know."

"Certain sure, Fan; but you know we shall leave soon; so I guess he'll sink into oblivion, as far as I am concerned."

At the close of the summer Trudie returned to her elegant city home.

She had not driven again to Fern Dale, and, of course, still had the same belief in the report which made the owner a misshapen, morose man.

Coming right from the freedom and quiet of the country, Trudie felt a distaste to mingling in her gay circle right away.

Invitation after invitation she refused, until Mrs. Ludlow quite scolded her daughter.

"I shall think twice, Trudie, before I take you to the country again, if it takes away your taste for pleasure. What will your friends think of you? I do not wish you to be a mere society butterfly, my darling, only to fulfil the duties of your position."

The next day cards came for Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow and daughter for a party to be given by one of Trudie's best friends, and with the cards a note:

"DEAR TRUDIE,

"Have you given us all up entirely? I hope not. I want you to come to my party—it is Mamma's birthday as well as my own, and we have joined our two parties, she inviting all the 'old folks,' and I the younger ones, on the same evening. I shall really be put out if you don't come. Besides, brother Dick has a friend visiting him; the girls are almost in love with him already. He's just splendid! and Dick says, as noble a fellow as he looks. I am very unselfish in writing this note, for I know if you come, there's no hope for me."

"Yours devotedly,
"TRIX."

On the evening of the party, Mrs. Ludlow smiled with proud satisfaction as her daughter came in for her inspection.

Though rather below medium height, Trudie was exquisitely formed, and her sweeping dress of pale blue matelassée, trimmed with soft lace, set off her figure to the best advantage.

Resting on each tiny ear was a flower, the petals of which were turquoise, and in the centre a large diamond blazed.

Her paly gold hair was gathered at the top of the graceful head in a mass of puffs, confined by a comb to match her earrings of turquoise and diamonds.

The blended effect of the pale blue of the dress, the peach tint of the cheeks, and the soft gold of the hair, was truly bewitching.

As Trudie entered the room with her father and mother, a gentleman conversing with the hostess started, then said:

"Miss Spencer, who is that young lady just entering the room?"

"Oh, that is my Trudie. The young lady I have told you so much about. I will present you."

"When Miss Spencer had returned Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow's salutations, and lovingly embraced Trudie, she turned, and said:

"Miss Ludlow, this is my brother's friend, Mr. Walbridge."

Trudie bowed her golden head demurely, and passed on; but as she threaded her way, recognis-

ing her friends, she could feel his eyes following her.

Trudie was passionately fond of dancing, and, as a pretty, graceful girl never lacks for partners, she waltzed to her heart's content.

She noticed Mr. Walbridge did not join in the dancing, and wondered, as "he would make such an elegant figure on the floor," she thought.

During the evening she asked Dick Spencer why his friend did not dance.

"Thereby hangs a tale, Miss Trudie, and, if you like, I will tell it to you."

They were promenading, and could talk without being overheard; so he began:

"A year ago Walbridge and myself did the Welsh Mountains."

"One day as we were strolling along up a steep hill, a waggon approached us, driven by an old farmer with a little girl beside him."

"Just as they were near us, the old Methuselah of a horse took fright (I suppose at our tall forms looming up so unexpectedly) and dashed forward. I saw at a glance the danger, and so did my friend; and with a tremendous bound he reached the horse's head."

"It was not a young, frisky animal, and probably was ashamed of itself; for, taking a few more plunges, it stood still."

"But those few steps had worked damage to Will; when I came up to him he was suffering the most intense pain."

"One of the small bones of the ankle had been broken, although we didn't know it then."

"The gratitude of the farmer, who, as he looked down the steep incline, saw the danger he and his little one had been saved from, was heartfelt; but Walbridge has been troubled, more or less, ever since with the ankle."

"He was very lame for a time, and went to his home in the country, where he kept quiet for over a year."

As Trudie listened to Dick's graphic account, her eyes involuntarily sought the heroic young man, who had so bravely risked his life for perfect strangers.

He just then was looking toward her, and their eyes met.

Something magnetic in the dark orbs which met her own caused hers to droop, and the peach-tint of her cheek deepened, as she walked along, by Dick's side; her mind certainly not with the partner whose coat-sleeve her little white-gloved fingers touched.

"Mamma, how did you like Mr. Walbridge?" asked Trudie after the party.

"My darling, very much. There is a noble soul shining in his eyes."

Trudie smiled sweetly over the lilies she was daintily embroidering.

One bright afternoon the following summer, an elegant gathering assembled in Mrs. Ludlow's parlours.

There was a hush as a venerable, white-robed man took his place underneath the floral canopy. Soon a group of four entered the room:

A tall gentleman, on whose arm leaned a little figure covered with billows of lace, looking like a rosebud veiled in mist.

It was Trudie—and her husband, so soon to be—the same William Walbridge she met at Trixie Spencer's party.

That young lady now stood as her bride's-maid.

The ceremony was over, and Trudie, now a little wife, bade her father and tearful mother a goodbye.

"My mamma, I do not know where we are to live, for Will says he wishes to surprise me; but he has told me that you know, and will be there, you and papa to welcome me when I come home."

"Yes, Gertrude, we will surely not lose the opportunity of seeing you as soon as you return. Heaven bless you, my child! be as good a wife as your mother has been, and He will bless you."

The young couple went for their tour to the Welsh Mountains, as Trudie's request, and together walked up the steep hill to the spot of the accident.

"My noble Will, what if you had been killed instead of only wounded."

"My precious wife! it would have been bad for me—for I never should have met you."

The weeks glided swiftly away, and Mr. Walbridge and his wife started for their "little home," as he called it.

"What is the mystery, Will, about our home?"

"Wait and you will see."

So Trudie did wait, impatiently.

To her surprise, their journey came to an end at the place where she had spent the summer before, but her wonder increased as they took a carriage and drove along the very road she and her cousin had

traversed on the occasion of their visit to the "Ogre's Castle."

The entrance was reached, and they drove slowly through the beautiful, leafy archway, before Trudie realized the truth. Suddenly turning, she hid her face on her husband's shoulder.

"Oh, Will, you are the Ogre! What dreadful things I have said about you!"

Tenderly lifting the hidden face, he said:

"Little wife, I heard your conversation that afternoon by the fountain, but I did not lay it up, darling, as this shows."

And he clasped closer the hand with the plain golden ring.

"This is my home in the summer. That June I had just purchased it, as a quiet refuge where I could spend my invalid days."

By this time they had passed the fern-encircled fountain and had stopped before the door, where stood Mr. and Mrs. Ludlow.

Trudie rushed into their outstretched arms.

"Oh, mamma, did you know all the time?"

"Yes, William told us; but he wished to surprise you, as I can guess he has."

The next day Trudie wrote a long letter to her cousin Fannie, who was travelling abroad, and concluded:

"Fan, do you remember the 'Ogre's Castle' and our drive? Well, I am Madame Ogress now! My dear husband is quite the reverse of what I painted him that day. My heart reproaches me when I think of it."

"You must think of me now as the happiest girl the sun ever shone upon. Your Trudie is a happy wife, and that seems to her the sum total of happiness."

A HONEYMOON SOLILOQUY.

"HIGH-NO! Only four o'clock. A whole hour yet before Charlie comes! Not even time to dress—and dressing is such a bore—only that Charlie likes to have me meet him looking my best, the dear, exacting fellow! After the arduous duties of that horrid office it is only his due. I'll ring for Nanette to come and lay out the new cream-coloured faille, with point lace trimmings, and dead gold set. Charlie, whose taste in dress is faultless, declares I'm just angelic in the cream-coloured faille, and I particularly desire to please Charlie to-day, the very last of our honeymoon. But nonsense! Our honeymoon will last for ever."

"The friend of my heart, Amina Perkinthorpe, said to me this morning, 'My love, is it possible? A whole month married, and not yet disilluded!' Amina is in her third season—is not engaged—and I'm sure she once adored my Charlie, so I can afford to laugh at the covert spleen."

"This novel is ridiculous! I'm perfectly disgusted with the author's views of life and society at large. The idea of marrying Eulalie with such élat to the object of her choice and then killing her off in the very last chapter—but one of a blighted heart of all things—and right in the first flash of conjugal felicity!"

"Let me see: She surprises her adored Armand in the midst of a bit of love-making, with Bellona Duregard in the role of heroine! Bellona is the cherished friend of her soul, and poor, deceived Eulalie perishes of grief in seven acts! A pretty spectacle of man's constancy—but then the author is a woman, and that accounts for it."

"I suppose she will cap the climax by uniting that deceitful Armand to his 'divine' Bellona, now that dear, abused Eulalie is safely out of the way! Men are perfidious wretches, always excepting my Charlie. Of course he is perfect."

"Thirty-seven minutes still till Charlie rings! And I can dress in ten. I will run into the conservatory for a moment. Those exquisite new exotic came to-day; they are absolutely beautiful. And I selected them from Floroli's choice assortment."

"Dear Charlie is so proud of my æsthetic tastes and familiarity with the fine arts, and I'm sure my knowledge is something to boast of. At least it involved the most dreadful expense and the most frightful exertion of going to London and adding one's brains about pictures and statues and things."

"I consider the conservatory a miracle of taste, if it is modelled after my idea. What wonderful effects of light and shade, what harmonious blending of nature and art. That marble Flora in the midst of her blushing daughters—the rose japonica—reminds one of the—ah, the what-d'ye-call-it?—in the Louvre. I've forgotten her name, but I'm sure the smile is striking!"

"This calampellis makes a perfect fair bower of the great bay window. I especially date on the bay window, because it overlooks Amina Perkinthorpe's new rosary, of which she is so vain, and I am perfectly

sure she never glances this way without a positive pang of envy and chagrin.

"Ah, there she is now! apparently absorbed in contemplation of her pet grandifloras, yet evidently keeping watch for the advent of somebody; that poor, demented Vonderplunk, no doubt. Yes, she starts and listens, disposes her drapery more becomingly, gives her sun-bat a coquettish tilt, and strolls absently towards the park entrance of the nursery.

"There! a gate clicks somewhere behind that screen of thunbergia. Amina flings forward with cordial welcome. Her start of surprise was rather affected, but very effective, no doubt, in poor Vonderplunk's deluded eyes.

"Why, dear me! Is that Charlie behind the smilex hedge? My lorgnette must be playing me tricks! What upon earth can he be doing among Amina's roses? Surely he—oh! goodness gracious me! He is actually kissing the creature!"

(Grand tableau among the exotics; curtain descends upon hysterics and demolished flower-pots.)

REUBEN;

OR,

ONLY A GIPSY.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Ah, said Morgan Verner, Olive Seymour would smile upon an ugly dog who danced and frisked at her heels. I know her.

"Do you!" exclaimed Normanby, with hidden scorn as he glanced at the mean face of his dupe and tool. "Well, she has smiled, at least, and Sir Edward has done more; so far, our plans have succeeded, only be respectful and deferential, and I think you may win the beauty's regard."

"Heard! Faww! she may keep that. I don't want her love. I want her money!" retorted Morgan, coarsely.

"Hush!" said Normanby, with a warning gesture. "Remember where you are! Lucky dog, to be so indifferent, while others are suffering agonies of hopeless passion for the exquisite creature. My dear Morgan, you must have lost your heart elsewhere. What pretty charmer owns the valuable organ?"

"Ah, that's telling," said Morgan, with a cunning smile; "she's far away from here, Nor, and she can't cut a dash like my fine lady there, but she's not to be sneezed at is pretty little—" he stopped abruptly, and Reuben, who had only caught a word here and there, half rose to move out of earshot, but a movement on Mr. Normanby's part arrested him.

"Look!" said that gentleman, "something may happen after all. Do you see that man talking to her cousin—now Olive has joined them! Watch her face! Do you see? Hah! hah!"

"She has grown as red as the rose in her hair!" said Morgan. "Who is he?"

"Don't you recognise him?" said Mr. Normanby. "It's Lord Craven. Now, Morgan, my dear fellow, play your cards well. Do you know why he is here?"

"How can I tell?" snarled Morgan. "He has come to ask her to be his wife!" said Mr. Normanby, softly.

"No!" cried Morgan.

"Hush!" said Mr. Normanby. "Don't look so frightened. She won't have him, and she'll say so; I will watch them; you go into the hall-room, and keep a little apart from them. Craven will take her into one of the ferneries, and put the question—when they come out again I will raise my hand to this feather in my cap. That's the signal."

"For what?" asked Morgan, arranging his mask hurriedly.

"For you to cut in and put your question! Don't you see? Catch her at the rebound! A girl never refuses two men in one night, therefore her second stands a good chance!"

"I see, I see!" said Morgan.

"There they go!" said Normanby. "Come this way," and with Morgan on his arm, they passed quickly out.

Reuben rose, his face pale, his hands hot and trembling.

How to restrain himself he knew not. He could have dashed after them and struck the coarse, vulgar fool at his feet!

He, the mean-faced, cowardly Morgan Verner, to speak so lightly of Olive Seymour!

He, forsooth, to snatch with vicious hands, the fairest flower of all the gorgeous blossoms, and cast it aside with clownish scorn and blind indifference! No, it should not be.

Rather would he throw himself at her feet, and tell her all!

Would she believe him—him, Reuben the gipsy? who had gained admittance to the place by false pretences!

Mad with doubt, despair, and indecision, Reuben caught up the glass, and poured himself out draughts after draught of wine, with some insane idea of gaining courage and decision.

Then drawing his cloak round him, he made his way to the hall-room, and glared round it in search of the woman whom he would have saved from the clutches of Morgan Verner, and that arch fiend, Normanby.

With a sudden pang of dread he missed her. Slowly he threaded his way through the ever moving mass, in search of the father and daughter.

At last he found the former sitting beside the hostess, and chatting with careless enjoyment.

Olive was no where to be seen.

"Oh, if I could but lay this plot before you!" thought Reuben, as he leaned near the maid's chair, "if I knew what was best to do!"

While he stood tortured by his indecision, Sir Edward gave his arm to Lady Prestynell, and led her away.

The music commenced for a stollion, the corridors grew less crowded, and Reuben could see more distinctly, but still there was no Olive amongst the crowd.

With a bitter, fierce despair raging in his heart, he made his way towards the quiet ante-room, and sinking into a chair by the window, sat glaring at the moving, glittering mass.

"Even now," he mused, "she may be falling into their toils; may have already promised to be this cur's wife! He who is not even smitten by her beauty, but is allured by the miserable gold which fatally clings to her!"

The heat seemed overpowering; careless of the consequences, he opened his long cloak, and flung it from him; the room seemed to spin round him; the intensity of his passion, added to the unusual quantity of the wine which he had taken—and taken in sheer ignorance of its strength and his danger, overpowered him—his head fell upon his bosom, and he fell into a half-swoon.

Where was Olive?

Flushed with pleasure, attuned to the spirit of the hour, Olive was happy with the happiness of a woman just waking to a consciousness of her beauty and its magic power.

With her father by her side, surrounded by a band of devoted courtiers, flattered, admired, she, soaring above the idle flatteries, revelled in the beauty and the brilliancy of the scene, and felt that delight which belongs to the butterfly, who, emerging from the chrysalis, dits from flower to flower, glorying in the sunshine and the summer-scented air, and happy if but for the hour.

Sir Edward watched her with a proud smile upon his face, and at times a moisture in his eyes.

She was his own darling child!

His own!

"Your daughter is making quite a sensation, Sir Edward," said Lady Bakewell.

"She looks happy," said Sir Edward.

"And I am happy," said Olive. "Who would not be? This is my first fancy ball, Lady Bakewell."

"Oh," replied her ladyship, "I remember my first. My card was as full as yours, then, my dear. Let me look at yours."

Olive handed it to her.

"There is no Black Knight down?" said Lady Bakewell.

"Black Knight?" said Olive. "Who is that?"

"Don't you know! Strange creature he is!" said Lady Bakewell, turning to Sir Edward. "I have seen him several times this evening lurking about like a conspirator; he thinks no one knows him—but I do. I knew him in a moment. Here he comes at last!"

Olive turned and saw a tall figure making its way towards them.

"I do not know him!" she said.

"No!" exclaimed Lady Bakewell. "How handsome he looks! The character fits him—the gleaming armour showing through the black cloak. Now, guess! Be quick, he is coming this way."

"Why!" exclaimed Sir Edward. "It can't be—"

"Hush!" said Lady Bakewell. "I want Miss Seymour to guess. He has turned his cloak since I saw him, for it had a red cross upon a corner of it."

In another minute the Black Knight was by their side.

"Good evening, Sir Edward."

Sir Edward laughed heartily.

"I thought I knew you," he said.

"Ah, I feared to trust my poor disguise, and so thought I would make a clean breast of it. And I too late for a dance, Miss Seymour?"

He bowed and disappeared.

Olive turned at the sound of the voice, and the colour fled from her cheeks.

The Black Knight was Lord Craven.

"Lord Craven!" she said, almost fearfully, then, recovering herself, "my card is full. I am so sorry."

"And I," said Craven.

"You are rightly served!" cried Lady Bakewell, tapping him with her fan playfully. "You should have declared yourself earlier. I saw you, and knew you, in the hall! What have you done with your red cross?"

Lord Craven smiled with a puzzled air, and shook his head.

Before he could ask her meaning, Lady Bakewell was carried away by her partner for the next dance.

Olive followed with a King Charles the First, and Lord Craven was left with Sir Edward.

He stood talking with his usual composure, but his eyes wandered after Olive and followed her with that look in them which love alone can produce.

"You have been here some time?" said Sir Edward.

"Not very long," said Lord Craven, absently. "How crowded the rooms. I came up on purpose for this—the only great thing of the season. And you are staying here?"

"Yes," said Sir Edward; "I fancied a change would do Olive good, and I think it has."

"She looks well—beautiful," Lord Craven almost said.

"She is flushed," said Sir Edward. "I hope she will not over-do it!" he added thoughtfully.

"May I take her into one of the cool rooms for a rest?" asked Lord Craven, anxiously.

"Oh, thank you; if she will go," said Sir Edward, laughing.

And Lord Craven, with a smile, made his way to that part of the room where Olive was dancing.

She saw him coming, and a foreshadowing of his purpose fell upon her.

The dance over he was at her side, and with a few words had gained possession of her.

"I am a fully accredited guardian with your father's consent," he said.

"I shall be so glad of a rest," said Olive. "I have enjoyed myself so."

"Let me hope it is not all over even yet," he said, looking at her with admiring earnestness.

"You have been here some time?" she said; as they entered the card room.

Lord Craven laughed.

"No," he said, "not very long."

"Lady Bakewell says she has seen you all the evening."

Olive responded with a smile.

"Lady Bakewell is mistaken," he said.

"I too fancied that I had seen a knight or some one in armour."

Lord Craven paused to look back at the ball-room.

"No, there is no one in armour but myself," he remarked, with a smile. "Will you sit here?"

They had reached the next picture-gallery, and Olive sank into a lounge with a little pleasant sigh.

"I am afraid," she said, "that gentlemen do not like balls as well as women do."

"Not all," said Lord Craven. "I, for one, don't care for them,—or did not. I enjoyed the last I was at."

"Where was that?" she asked.

"At my own house; you were there," he replied, gravely.

Olive sank into silence.

"You have forgotten it?" he said, almost reproachfully. "The night is one that will live in my memory as long as there are days and nights for me."

He paused and looked down at her, and the glade in the woods seemed to rise before her; she knew that he was going to ask her for her promise.

"Olive," he said, "I have come from Talbot to-night on the chance of seeing you. I had determined to see you and to say nothing of the matter near my heart. But it is too near for silence. Olive, do you remember the old oak in the woods, and the question I put to you there?"

She did not speak, and he went on.

"Forgive me for recalling it now and here, but I cannot see you as be near you without striving to win you! Olive, you will give me an answer to-night? I love you more dearly since that time if that is possible, and I implore you to say yes to my prayer for hope!"

Olive looked up at him, and then looked down with a sigh.

Lord Craven started and turned pale.

"A word only?" he breathed. "Tell me that I may try to win your love, and I shall go back the happiest of all the throng—ah, the happiest man in all the world! Say yes, and make me your slave, Olive! Do not fear that I will be false to the spirit of my vow. I ask only for hope. You will not send—"

—and again, "You will not send—"

me from you! Tell me that I may stay!" his voice trembled, his face flushed.

Olive looked up at him pale as himself.

"Lord Craven—I cannot!"

He started, then his hand dropped from the top of the lounge to his side, and he stood motionless.

"You cannot!" he said. "You send me away. There is no hope, Olive!"

"No—no! I will not. I cannot let you deceive yourself!" said Olive, in distress.

"I ask only for a chance to win your love!" he said. "You—then he stopped and fixed his eyes on her—"You have not given it to another!"

For a moment her face flushed, then it paled as she said in a low voice, full of quiet dignity.

"You have no right to ask that, my lord!"

"No!" he said, harshly. "I have no right. Forgive me! Forgive me, as you will soon forget me! Olive, Miss Seymour, I shall quit your presence to-night for years—for ever. Fear not! You have told me I dare not hope, and I accept despair!"

As he spoke in a low voice, full of firm determination, he held out his arm to her; but she shrank back.

"No—I will stay—a little while. Go—please go!"

Lord Craven bowed, and quietly drew aside the curtains at the doorway and passed out.

He paused a moment nearly opposite the curtains behind which sat poor Reuben, still in a stupor, and accepted rest in thought.

As he stood his cloak dropped from his shoulders. Mindless of his loss he strode on and passed into the hall-room, where the laughter and the gaiety were at their highest pitch.

As he went from one room to another, a figure in red which stood leaning against a statue caught his hand to the feather in its cap.

Morgan Verner at the other end of the room saw the signal and hurried round to the card room.

Meanwhile, Reuben suddenly awoke and sprang to his feet with a sharp sense of unconsciousness and bewilderment.

A glance at the ball-room recalled him to his position, and with a sigh he stooped and picked up, not his own cloak, but Lord Craven's.

Folding it round him, he walked moodily towards the picture gallery.

It was at that moment that Morgan Verner entered the room.

Seeing Lord Craven, as he supposed, making his way back to Olive, Morgan bent a hasty retreat and returned to Normanby.

"He has gone back!" he growled.

"Phew! That looks bad," murmured Normanby. "Wait here until I come back, and," he added, looking at Morgan's red eyes and flushed face, "Don't take any more wine, mon ami!"

Reuben by this time had gained the picture-gallery, and stood at its entrance wondering whether Lord Craven had succeeded, or the two players.

He did not know how long he had been asleep, and was too sick aghast to care.

To him affairs looked hopeless, and the most expedient course for him, he considered, would be to fly the scene, leave a note at Sir Edward's villa, and return to Dingley.

Slowly he entered the room to snatch a few more moments for reflection.

As he did so a lady came from a lounge in a dim corner and approached him with a quick, gliding motion.

Reuben waited, and to his amazement she stopped before him, and with an agitated movement of her hand, as if she were struggling for calm, said, in a low voice:

"Lord Craven—I am glad you have come back! I was going to seek you. You were right, and I was unjust. You had a right to ask me the question. Oh, my lord, can you not guess, and, pitying me, spare the answer? My heart is given—lost! Do not shrink—you, who have acted so nobly and honourably, despise me; but you do not know all. I did not know, until your question let the light upon me, that—that I loved already!"

She paused, her head lowered, her hands clasped. Reuben stood as if transfixed to stone, then the blood rushed to his face, with mad rage and passion.

"She loves Morgan Verner," he thought, and the thought set his brain whirling.

"You love?" he exclaimed, in a low, concentrated voice of passionate despair and vain wrath, so different to his own that Olive did not recognise it. "You tell this to me, who would die to see you happy. Olive, I am your slave; but I will speak. Should I stand idly by if a wolf were crouching before you at the spring? Should I stand meekly by your side and watch you raise the poison cup to your lips? No, I should dash it from your hand! A wild beast is at your throat, poison is near your lips; and you, mad with an infatuation which bewilders me, are bound hand and foot at the mercy of both! You

love! Impossible! I will not—I cannot—believe it! As well tell me that the eagle mates with the carrion crow! You, Olive Seymour, stoop to bestow a thought on such a base reptile as—"

"Stop, my lord!" said Olive, drawing herself to her full height, and flashing up at him a pair of proud, wounded eyes. "Reptile is no word for the man I love. Such words hurled at such a man recoil upon him who throws them. He may be beneath you in rank, but he's your equal in all that makes a man."

"Enough!" said Reuben, dashing his hand to his dagger. "I am mad—or you—it matters not. Sooner than see you the wife of that mean clod of base, sordid clay I would lay you dead at my feet! Beware! I set no value on the life which you found so cheaply worthless. You might have raised me to the skies—you lower me to the beasts by confessing to such a base infatuation. Lady, I put you to the pledge. Give me your word that you will not marry him, and I leave you for ever. Refuse that pledge, and by the Heaven above us, I will lay you dead at my feet, satisfied with the sacrifice which has saved you from the consequences of a blind infatuation!"

He drew the dagger at his side as he spoke and advanced towards her.

Olive shrank for a moment, then drew herself up.

"Strike home, assassin. I know now that I love him, for I can die for that love! Strike home! Do not fear! I shall not give the alarm! You can kill me, Lord Craven, but you cannot kill the love which you yourself have shown me that I have for him!"

Reuben, aghast and bedazed, returned the dagger to its sheath, and put up his hand as if to shut her from his sight.

"No—live! You are dead to me from this hour. Marry him, and live to learn how much worse than death is life-long bondage to a soulless cur."

Flinging his cloak round him, he turned and slowly moved away.

Olive sank upon the couch, breathless and powerless to move.

Reuben gained the door and raised his hand to sweep aside the curtain; as he did so Morgan Verner and Normanby crept behind a pillar waiting for Reuben to get clear away.

"Now," said Normanby, as Reuben disappeared through the entrance to the ball-room; "now is your time, quick, before she has time to leave the place."

"But—but—" stammered Morgan, whose Dutch courage was rapidly failing him. "How do you know that she has refused him?"

"Look at his face!" said Normanby, scornfully.

"Go—man—go," said he, pushing Morgan forward.

Morgan reached the entrance, then stopped suddenly, and stooping down picked something from the floor.

It was a letter, and as he turned it over he started with amazement to see that it was addressed to himself.

With a trembling hand he tore it open and read as follows:

"My dear, dear MORGAN,

"I hope you will forgive my writing to you; but I am so dreadfully unhappy that I feel I should go mad if I didn't write and tell you all. You know how strange father has been since the day of the trial, and you have often wondered what it is. Dear Morgan, I have found out, and I am wretched. Father has been on to me this morning about Reuben, Reuben that they made steward of Dingley, and father says that Reuben loves me, and that—that—oh, Morgan, dear Morgan, I don't like to write it, for I know how angry you will be!—that I must marry him! I have cried my eyes out all night long, but I don't know what to do; father is so passionate and stern when anything crosses him, and if something is not done I know he will make me marry Reuben. One time I should not have minded, but now—I would rather die, dear Morgan, than marry any one but you! You will make me your wife, dearest, I know, and I am trying all I can to be a lady for your sake. And now, dear Morgan, tell me what I must do? Reuben was here the other day, and father told him enough to show him that he would give his consent to our marriage, and I am afraid that Reuben might be afraid or ashamed to say no. I know he doesn't care for me, but he didn't like to say so to father. I am so miserable without you, Morgan dear, and I dream of you all night and think of you all day. Now I have written this I feel that I must—I must—come to you and be near you, if you don't come to me, and that if you are not by my side father will make me marry Reuben in spite of all. Forgive me for writing, Morgan, dearest, and send me word at once what I am to do.

"From your devoted—

P.S.—I don't know how to send this: you forgot to give me your address, but I will try to send it by the carrier, unless I get a better opportunity."

Morgan's face went from white to crimson, and then pale again.

With a quick step he returned to Normanby.

"What is the matter?" asked Normanby, with a smothered oath.

"Eh—oh, nothing," replied Morgan.

Then, seeming to change his mind, he held out a letter.

"Look here, Nor, this is a rum thing; quite upset me: a letter addressed to me from a—little girl in the country, the girl I told you about. Found it here on the floor!"

"You dropped it, idiot!" said Normanby, losing his calm for the moment.

"No," said Morgan. "I never saw it before—it was only written yesterday, and," he added with an oath, "I don't do anything else until I find how this came here," and he thrust Polly's letter in his pocket with a suspicious snarl.

CHAPTER XXVI.

It was the morning after the ball. Eaton Villa was quiet and subdued in the bright morning sunlight.

In the fanciful little room which Mr. Normanby had so thoughtfully suggested would make a capital boudoir for Miss Seymour, sat Miss Seymour herself.

The sun-blinds were drawn, and the room was nearly in darkness, but there was still sufficient light to show that Olive's face was pale and haggard.

She lay on the couch in an attitude of exhaustion, and her small hands hung down white and weary, telling the story of a sleepless, troubled night—or rather morning, for when the Seymour carriage reached the villa the dawn had almost grown to full day.

With her eyes fixed upon vacancy, and her bewildered thoughts flying from the scene of the preceding night to others in which Reuben, Morgan, and Lord Craven had figured, she strove to realise the position in which the outburst of the supposed Lord Craven had placed her.

He had let in upon her soul the light of knowledge and of truth.

She loved Reuben the Gipsy!

There was no shirking that truth; bitter as it was she was compelled to accept it.

And bitter it was indeed to the proud heiress of Dingley, to find that she had given her heart to a nameless youth, whom the law had marked as a vagrant, and whom the world would class as a vagabond.

A gipsy! she loved a gipsy?

With a start and a shudder she glided to the window with her hands to her burning forehead, now crimson with shame and mortification.

"I will cast this madness from me! It is infatuation. I am bewitched. Oh, Reuben, what had I done to you that you should steal my heart and cover me with shame! For it is shame, and disgrace, for me Olive Seymour to love her father's steward, a nameless gipsy!"

The door opened and Sir Edward entered.

"Olive," he said. "I thought you were here—oh, there you are! How dark the room is. Shall I pull the blinds aside?"

"No—no!" said Olive, hurriedly laying her hand upon his arm.

Sir Edward started and turned to her anxiously.

"Why, my darling, what's the matter, are you ill? Your hand burns like fire!"

"No—no, only tired; you forget, papa, how late we were!"

"Yes—yes," said Sir Edward, trying to see her face.

"Too late, I am afraid! Olive, I fear this life is doing you more harm than good. But here is news from Dingley—bad news, I am sorry to say."

"Bad news!" said Olive.

"Yes," said Sir Edward. "I feel worried to death. I—I don't know which way to turn, and now Spade Oak Farm is burnt down!"

"Burnt down?" said Olive.

"Yes," said Sir Edward. "It is insured, but—but I am so busy now, and, of course, it must be rebuilt."

"When did the letter come?" asked Olive.

"There was no letter. Reuben came up himself. He is downstairs."

"Reuben!" said Olive, sinking into a chair.

"Yes," said Sir Edward, not noticing in his preoccupation her sudden agitation; "yes, he seems to have been here two or three days, waiting and trying to catch me. Didn't like to send the news by letter, in case I should think things worse than they are, and for the same reason wouldn't leave a message. At least, that is what I can gather from him. I think something is the matter with him. I never saw a man so changed—he's as white and haggard as a ghost, and seems sad and abstracted. He is wait-

POLLY."



[THE BLACK KNIGHT.]

ing downstairs; would you like to go down and see him?"

"No," said Olive; "why should I?" and she coloured suspiciously.

"Oh, I thought you might like to hear how the animals and pets were at Dingley, that's all," said Sir Edward, innocently. "I must go and write these letters for him to take back. I'm sure I'm the most harassed man in England. Mr. Verner is to call here, too, at two o'clock to take me to the city," and, with his hand to his brow, the amiable, but weak baronet left the room.

Olive rose and paced the floor.

Reuben was downstairs. He was ill, harassed, changed. A burning curiosity, longing desire, to see him overcame her better judgment.

Smoothing her hair with her white, hot hands, and forcing a smile something like the old serenity into her face, she glided down the stairs.

The dining room was open, and she was about to enter.

A gentleman dressed in a morning suit stood by the window. That could not be Reuben?

As she hesitated, he turned, and she saw that it was he.

If she started, so did he. His face, which had been pale and drawn, flushed with a bright look of delight, and as suddenly relapsed into its pallor and weariness.

He seemed unable to speak, but stood with his dark eyes fixed upon her as if waiting for some sentence.

Olive came forward, with a little friendly inclination of her head.

"Good morning, Mr. Reuben," she said; "I am sorry you have brought such bad news from Dingley."

Reuben's eyes opened, and an expression of bewilderment and surprise shone in them to the exclusion of any other.

Was this all! Did she mean to ignore last night's work and words; or was he dreaming?

"The farm is quite burnt, I suppose!" said Olive, gaining composure at his evident loss of it; woman-like.

Reuben nodded and his lips moved.

"I am afraid London does not agree with you," said Olive, raising her eyes to his face. "You are not looking well. Did you come up this morning?"

"This morning!" exclaimed Reuben, in a low voice. "Have you forgotten what happened when you last saw me? Forgotten! No you cannot!"

Olive's eyes opened now, and as she sank into a chair by the window she looked up at him in quiet amazement.

"Happened! when last I saw you?—at the station, do you mean, Reuben?"

Reuben half strode towards her, then stopped, and swiftly walking to the window placed his hand upon his brow and groaned.

Olive rose and hastened to the bell.

"You are ill!" she cried, with sudden alarm, and a fearful suspicion. Was he mad! Had the cares of his new position been too much for his reason?"

"No—no!" he exclaimed, stretching out his hand.

"Stay, I implore you. You say, lady, that you saw me last at the station—at Dingley?"

"Certainly," said Olive, in a low voice. "I have not seen you since!"

Reuben dropped into a chair and stared at the Turkey carpet as if he would find a solution of the mystery in its many coloured threads.

"I have not seen you since: do you think you have seen me?"

"Think!" said Reuben.

"In the park, perhaps!" said Olive, with no embarrassment whatever.

Reuben stared at her, then his face flushed.

He had jumped to a conclusion.

She had decided to ignore the events of the preceding night; to blot them out—to forgive him!

There could be no other explanation of her conduct. No other saving the one that he had either taken leave of his senses, or had been the victim of a dream.

He looked round the room. No, he was not mad! Then he smiled gravely.

"Yes, lady, in the park. I—I—am rather bewildered by the change—I—" he looked round for help, and Olive unconsciously gave it.

"I am so sorry!" she said, earnestly. "This trouble at Dingley has made you ill! It is all our fault! You must not work so hard; indeed, you must not! I will speak to Sir Edward! Please sit down, and let me ring for some wine!"

And she rose to do so.

Reuben sat down in silence; strengthened in his opinion of her conduct.

A servant entered and placed wine upon the table.

Olive filled a glass and brought it to Reuben.

He took it, but his hand shook so that he could not hold it.

Olive with one hand drew a small papier mache table towards her and placed the glass upon it.

"Drink it," she said, with an earnest smile. "I am so distressed to see you like this!"

"Actress!" he thought, and the look in his eyes as he glanced up at her made her shudder, for surely she thought his reason had weakened under the strain.

Reuben drank the wine and sat looking out at the park, Olive standing beside him, and watching him. At last Reuben turned.

"Can you tell me, lady, how soon Sir Edward intends returning to Dingley?"

A sudden decision settled upon her.

"Almost at once!" she said.

Reuben sighed with an air of relief.

Then he rose.

"I do not know whether I am to wait Sir Edward's return," he said in a low voice.

"Yes," said Olive. "Will you not tell me something about home, meanwhile? How is the calf?"

"The calf!" said Reuben, and again he looked at her. She could talk about the calf with the calmness of a mind at peace.

"The calf is all right," he said, in a sort of despair. "Everything is safe and well—save the Spade-Oak Farm."

"Oh, I was sure of that," said Olive, soothingly.

"I knew you would keep your trust! Dear Dingley, how I long to see it again."

"You do?" he said.

"Yes," said Olive, "I never knew how much I loved it until I left it—ah! here is papa."

And she glided towards Sir Edward, whispering as she passed out:

"Come to me before you send him away."

Sir Edward looked after her with a curious stare, and came up to Reuben.

"Here are the letters, Reuben; I can trust all to you, and I thank you for all you have done. It was kind of you to take so much trouble, out of regard for my feelings, and I am afraid you have suffered for my consideration. You look quite pale and ill. Oh, dear, dear! The world is full of anxiety, Reuben. Tell them I can't come back to Dingley yet, I am too busy in the city. But there, I'm sure you will set the matter straight; and as to the farm, why I find I've much to be thankful for! There are no lives lost!"

Reuben rose, and Sir Edward held out his hand.

"Oh!" he said, suddenly. "Just wait a moment, will you? I will be back directly," and he hurried from the room.

Olive stood in the drawing-room door and beckoned him.

(To be Continued.)



[MRS. ARNOLD GIVES ADVICE.]

TRUE WORTH.

CHAPTER V.

As NELLY met her father at the front door, for she was on the watch for him, and sprang into his arms, he gave her a kiss, and a fervent but silent prayer arose from a sincere heart, that his Nelly might never be so unblessed as those from whom he had but now parted.

And Mary Benson, as she came up with her bright smile of welcome, received a warm embrace.

At the tea-table he narrated to his family the sufferings he had witnessed, and was amply repaid for the cold reception he had met from Mr. Arnold, in the tears of Mary and Nelly, while even Georgey could scarcely restrain his tears, young as he was.

The evening was spent in collecting clothes, and shoes, and stockings, for the wretched family; a respectable bundle being gathered, and Mary and Nelly each added something more than a mite to the shilling of Mr. Arnold.

Charles Benson slept soundly and sweetly that night.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, Benson started off with his bundle under his arm, and eight o'clock saw him in Cherry Street.

"Here, good folks," he said, pushing open the door without knocking, "here is something my people have sent to you, and here, Mrs. Scott, is a trifle I have collected," and he handed her a sum sufficient to keep off cold and starvation for many weeks.

The poor woman could not utter one word; her heart was too full for thanks, but her tears spoke eloquently, as with a little one clinging to each side of her clothes, she stood before him.

"Has your husband been home yet?" he asked. "He went away not ten minutes ago. I dare say you will find him in the grocer's shop next door, which also deals in spirits. I did not dare to tell him I had any money, or he would have taken it from me."

"Show him to me; I want to see him," and without a word he followed Mrs. Scott.

"There he is," she said, pointing to a man about the medium size, shabbily dressed, who was leaning on the counter, pleading, with all the earnestness of despair, just for one glass.

"Not a drop without the money, Scott," was the surly answer of the shopkeeper, whose face showed a perfect acquaintance with the articles in which he dealt—"not a drop; you owe me a shilling now, and I won't trust you another penny."

"Only one glass, Mr. Grimes," whined the wretched drunkard, whose frame was fairly convulsed for the want of the stimulus on which he had so long fed. "I've got a job down on the wharf, and upon my word I will pay you to-night."

"I tell you I won't give you one drop," and as he spoke thus decidedly, Scott turned around in despair, and Mr. Benson caught sight, for the first time, of his bloated, haggard face and bloodshot eyes.

"Come here, Scott," said Mr. Benson, sternly, and the poor fellow, for he deserved pity, after all, dear reader, obeyed like a whipped spaniel, though he knew not why. The sound of his name, pronounced so authoritatively by a stranger, perhaps, startled him.

As he neared Mr. Benson, the latter said, in a tone as stern as he could make it, "Come with me," and wondering why he had obeyed the command, Scott followed him.

"Now stand there till I come out," he said, pointing to the house where Mrs. Scott resided, and again he was obeyed, while Mrs. Scott, who had returned to her cellar, was awaiting with fear and trembling the result of the interview; for as soon as she had pointed her husband out to Mr. Benson, she went away.

"Mrs. Scott," he said, abruptly, "he is a desperate case, but by Heaven's help I will try and save him. I am going to take him to-day with me, and I will keep him so busy he shan't have time to think of drink. You have money enough now to do as I wish. Go directly and find some other apartment. Get out of this vile neighbourhood. Buy such things as are actually necessary. Mind, you must do it at once. It must all be done to-day; and when you have got fixed, come to me," and drawing forth his memorandum book, he wrote the number of the street where he was working, and handing it to her, said: "and let me know. I will come home with him. There, never mind—thank me some other time," and he hurried off.

Scott was standing there when he returned, and saying only "follow me," he started for the lower part of William Street, where he was fitting up a large building into offices.

"Here, William," he said to the foreman in charge, "keep this fellow hard at work all day. Don't let

him out of your sight a minute, and don't give him a penny.

"Why, I know him very well, Mr. Benson. You have got the hardest kind of a customer to deal with. He is a first-rate workman if he would only keep sober, and he has got such a nice wife and two sweet children."

"I know it, William. I met them yesterday by chance, and for their sakes I am going to try and save him. But, mind what I tell you—don't let him off a minute. Now I think of it, he hasn't had a mouthful to-day. Let one of the boys go with him, and give him some breakfast—mind, don't give him a penny."

"All right, sir," said William, who, knowing Scott well, as he had worked in the same shop with him, fully entered into the wishes of his employer; and one of the younger hands was sent with Scott, with strict instructions to give him a hearty breakfast, but not let him have any money, nor a drop of liquor.

Towards the hour for "knocking off," Mrs. Scott made her appearance, and was immediately recognised by William, who, having received his instructions from Mr. Benson, took her new address, and bade her hurry home as fast as possible, as Mr. Benson was coming up with Scott.

At the close of the working hours, Mr. Benson, who had returned and ascertained from William Mrs. Scott's new residence, called him to his side, and said, in kind tones:

"Well, Scott, how do you feel now?" "Oh, better, sir—much better. I am tired, and awfully hungry."

"I hope you are not thirsty," he said, meaningly.

"Not very, sir," said Scott, hanging down his head.

"Now, Scott, I know something about you and your family. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to act so—a good workman as you are, to let your wife and children starve, and all for rum. Now, mark me well—I will give you work if you keep sober, but the very first time you get tipsy, as sure as my name is Benson, you shall go to prison for a month, and I will see that your family don't suffer."

"I'll try, sir," said the poor wretch, completely humbled by a kind word.

"No, sir, say you won't. You can do anything, if you only think you can. Don't say try."

"I am much obliged to you, sir, for thinking of me at all."

"Why, Scott, to tell you the truth, I don't think anything of you now, I think only of your wife and children, who were actually starving while you might have had a good home for them. You ought to be ashamed to think you are a man."

"I know it, sir; but, oh, it's got such hold upon me."

"Think of your wife, and those dear little children, actually starving. Why, I saw your wife out in the street yesterday, picking coal out of a barrel of ashes, and she wife of a mechanic, and a good workman. Shame on you! you deserve to be—"

"I know it, sir. I know I deserve anything. Oh, if I only could—"

"I tell you, you shall—there's no if about it. You must and shall, and if you don't, mark my words, you shall spend a month getting out stone. That's harder work than swinging a plane or an adze for six shillings a day."

"Yes; but nobody will give me work now."

"Didn't I give you work, and didn't I tell you that I would give you work as long as you are sober. What more do you want?"

"Nothing, sir. I thank you very much. I'll try hard, sir, and I will—good night," and he was about to turn down Franklin's towards Cherry Street, when Mr. Benson arrested him, saying,

"Not that way—come with me."

"If you please, sir, I'd like to go home now."

"Home, Scott, do you call that filthy den a home for the wife and children of a mechanic like you? I wonder how you can dare to look them in the face. Come with me, you can go home presently," and he led him on until they reached Pearl Street.

Scanning the numbers of the houses as they passed along, Mr. Benson at last found the one which had been named by Mrs. Scott to his friend, and he entered the front door, followed by the wondering and scarcely sobered Scott.

"This is the house, I think," and without a word he ascended to the second story.

Mrs. Scott heard his footsteps on the stairs, for gratitude had instinctively taught her he was coming, and she was standing in the door of the back room, anxiously looking out into the darkness below; for having closed the front door, the only light shed upon the stairs came from the open door of her new apartment, for she had already faithfully obeyed the commands of her benefactor.

"Here we are," said Mr. Benson, not noticing Mrs. Scott, but passing into the room, and turning to see how the husband and wife would meet. "Come in, Scott."

With wondering looks the poor inebriate entered; and at sight of him the children shrunk away, as if dreading his very presence.

For an instant he stood lost in amazement. There was his wife, sure enough.

Those were the voices of his children which he had heard, but this was not his home.

He turned from Mr. Benson to his wife—from his wife to Mr. Benson, in speechless astonishment.

At length humanity regained its sway, and sinking on his knees, he buried his face in his wife's clothes, and clasping his arms around her, burst into tears.

They were tears wrung from the heart of a true penitent.

The children crept from their hiding-places, and gazed in wonder upon this unusual scene.

Mrs. Scott had no power for words, but as hot, scolding tears rained upon the head of him for whom, and through whom, she had so deeply suffered, her grateful heart poured out its thanks for this single moment of happiness, the first she had tasted in many a weary month, for of a truth, the husband who had been "dead to her was alive again."

Mr. Benson joined involuntarily in his share of the tribute to emotions which he could not control, and for a few moments nothing was heard in that room save the sobs and tears of the long parted husband and wife.

At length Scott, now perfectly sobered by emotions to which he had so long been a stranger, arose from his knees, and placing one hand on his wife's shoulder, and raising the other, with a solemn impressiveness which spoke his sincerity, said:

"As Heaven is my judge, and as I hope for forgiveness, I will be a man once more. Susan, may Heaven bless you, and give me strength to keep my word."

The man spoke out there, and with Susan Scott, Mr. Benson believed; but he only said, with fearful eyes, as he took the hand of the reclaimed inebriate:

"I know if you only said you would, you could. But I must go now. Be down early to-morrow, Scott; William will set you at work."

"Not yet, sir," said Mrs. Scott, approaching him.

"Oh, do let me thank you."

"Thank me? What for?"

"This home—these comforts—my husband restored."

"Your husband can do that best, by proving himself worthy of you. I mean he shall pay for everything."

"That I will, and work my hands raw to do it."

"I don't want that, Scott. Pay me by being a man. You have everything now to encourage you."

"May Heaven shower choice blessings on you. Come here, children," exclaimed the wife, forgetting all her past sorrows in her present happiness, and as they came at her call, she threw herself on her knees, with one by each side, and raising her hands and eyes to Heaven, poured out the grateful emotions of her heart in an invocation for blessings on the head of her benefactor, so fervent, so eloquent, so earnest, he could not control himself, but burst into tears, and absolutely tore himself away, with a sensation of happiness at his heart the like of which even he had never before experienced.

CHAPTER VI.

It was the week before the holidays, and all the "world and his wife" were in quest of presents for loved ones at home.

The little folks were fairly wild with delight, as they opened their wondering eyes upon the vast store of toys and presents of every conceivable kind which were displayed in the windows of so many shops in the great thoroughfares.

In the morning (it was the day before Christmas) Robert Arnold with his wife went out, for business at that season justified an absence.

They found too much to look at, much to admire, and of course much to covet for the wee folk at home, and before he was well aware of it, some three pounds had slipped through his fingers for needless toys, which would not last beyond the New Year's day.

And while they were out it was necessary to make some preparation for the New Year, and they too were made at an expense it is almost wrong to mention. Enough was contracted for to have kept a respectable family for a month.

"Well, Belle, what are you to have for your Christmas?"

"Oh, that's for you to say, Robert," was the ready reply. "You know what I have so long coveted, and what you have so often promised when you could afford it."

"Really I forget. What do you mean, Belle?"

"Because you don't want to remember," she said, playfully pinching his arm.

"Upon my word I don't, Belle. You have everything now that heart could wish."

"Indeed I have not, Robert; and as you have promised it and I know you can afford it, I won't be put off any more."

"Well, put with it. What is it your heart is set upon?"

"Didn't you promise me a piano as soon as you could afford to get one," said Belle, looking archly in his face.

"But, Belle, you know you don't play, and Ida won't begin these three years yet. Why, she's only just turned of six."

"Yes, sir; but Ida's mother can learn, and Ida's mother wants to learn. How often you have said you wished I could play, to amuse you of an evening; now I want to learn for your sake."

This was a bit to speak in the most delicate manner, for Belle did not really want or mean to learn, but she felt that her first-class house, in its first-class neighborhood, was not completely furnished without a piano, and her heart was set upon it.

Robert, however, took her as she spoke, and, believing her to be sincere, was flattered by her evident desire to please him.

"You won't ask for or expect anything else?"

"Of course not," exclaimed his wife, joyfully, as she felt that the piano was her own; for, to tell the truth, Belle had changed even more than Robert during the brief season of prosperity which had followed him, and was much more addicted to outward show for fashion's sake than himself.

In the fulness of his heart, he had from time to time told her of the prosperous business he was doing, and when she learned that he was making over two thousand a year it seemed to her as if the purse of Fortunatus himself had been thrown in her lap.

At least she acted so, for her calls for money had been incessant, and they were never refused.

Her dresses rivalled those of many whose incomes were five times greater than her own. Her jewellery was more profuse and dazzling, and her ideas of her own importance were magnified more than fifty fold above all warrant.

She had been bred respectably, but in a very moderate position, and never dreaming of anything be-

yond a home and some one to support her, could not fully realize her present position.

True, she loved her husband, and now more than ever, because he was in a situation to gratify all her whims and caprices, and they had no limits; nor did she ever give herself the trouble to think that this might not last for ever. She was on the high road to wealth and fashion now. She was moving in a circle towards which a few years ago she looked with longing, admiring eyes, never even in her wildest dreams daring then to think of entering its precincts.

But she was there—young, handsome, gay and admired.

The height on which she stood was so great, it made her giddy to look down; and she would not.

Old and tried friends, who had known and loved her in earlier days, were dropped one by one, or driven away by her neglect to invite them to her numerous parties.

They were apt of her set, and she would lose caste by the association; so the acquaintances were dropped.

Robert ventured several times to remonstrate against this course, as he thought it looked unkind; but he was the weaker vessel, and invariably yielded, and the consequence was that he received his full share of condemnation as a purse-proud upstart, from those who felt that he was of a truth verifying the old adage, "get a hogger on horse-back, etc."

But to the piano.

Belle saw that the victory was her own, and the next thing was to secure one in keeping with their home, its neighborhood, and its furniture, and with her position, for she prided herself amazingly upon that.

Partly by coaxing, partly by pouting, and partly by insinuations, she secured her end, and before they reached home, Mr. Arnold had given his cheque for a piano, which pleased his wife exactly.

They did not purchase any more presents that day, for even Robert felt that he had acted a little unwisely.

He was, however, very prone to let things take their course, and when the piano came home late in the afternoon, and his wife went into ecstasies over it, and remarked that "now her parlours looked something like," he felt that he had done a good deed in affording her so much pleasure.

True, it would not be of any use for months to come, so far as his personal pleasure was concerned, except as friends might drop in whom he would tax, but then it was necessary to complete the furniture of his house, and it was there.

Two days before the new year, the bookkeeper of the concern handed him the balance sheet of the business, together with his individual account.

The former showed his share of the profits to be one thousand six hundred and fifty pounds, and he had drawn sixteen hundred and eighteen pounds, leaving him a balance of thirty-two pounds.

He felt that there ought to be some mistake, but he was very sure there was none.

He could not realize how he had expended so much money in so short a time, but figures do not lie, and they stared him in the face.

Sixteen hundred pounds in nine months, and how much did he owe?

Oh, he would stop this at once; that would never do, and examining the papers into his pocket-book, he started for home in a frame of mind not very amiable.

At the tea-table, he threw the papers before his wife, who, glancing over them, opened her large black eyes very wide, and for a moment seemed, as she really was, exceedingly surprised.

"But, Robert, dear, you really seem to forget how many expenses we had at the beginning. There was the furniture—that we've got, you know, and we've got the house, and—and"—she could not think of any more; but they had those, and there was some comfort in that.

True, he owed sixteen hundred on the house; and he owed two hundred on the furniture, and what was due in other quarters he did not know.

Robert, however, did not retire that night until he had ascertained his exact position, and he found that in addition to the four hundred and odd drawn from the concern, he owed nearly two hundred more.

This was almost frightful, and for a time he sat with his head buried in his hands, stunned, embarrassed, and bewildered.

The remonstrance and advice of Mr. Hardman came vividly to his memory, and he could not help feeling how truly all of his predictions were likely to turn out.

While thus engrossed, Belle entered the room, and seeing the table filled with papers, as once con-

jected the character of his occupation, and the nature of his thoughts.

Stepping softly up to him—for he was so deeply lost in thought he had not heard her enter—she stole behind him, and clasping her hands over his eyes, bent his head backwards, and imprinted a kiss upon his lips.

"Is that you, Belle?" he said, in a sorrowful voice.

"Why, have you lost all your friends and relatives, Bobby?" she said, half laughing. "You look as if you were a ruined man, and had lost every friend you had in the world."

"Not so bad as that, Belle; but I didn't think I had gone on quite so fast."

"So fast! why, dear, what do you mean?" and she drew up an elegant easy-chair covered with crimson figured velvet, and throwing herself in it, with an air which seemed to say, "come on, I'm ready to argue with you," she awaited his reply.

"I mean that I have spent all I have earned, and a little more."

"And how much more?"

"As much as used to keep us for two years before I went into business."

"And how much have you spent?"

"Four hundred and odd pounds, besides what I owe."

Now Mrs. Arnold prided herself on her perfect coolness and self-possession.

"True, she was gay, thoughtless, and full of life, but she never suffered herself to be surprised, and she was not now."

Four hundred and odd pounds, it was true, was a large sum, but he admitted he had earned it, and that was something she did not know before; though, as has been said, she knew he was prosperous, and that she spent money accordingly. Her plans were laid on the instant.

"Well, Robert, and what do you mean to do? What do you think of doing?"

"Don't you think we had better give up this house?"

"And what then?"

"And go back to boarding."

"And what then?"

"Why, it certainly won't cost so much to hire as it does now."

"And what then?" each time repeated with an imperturbable countenance, her eyes steadily fixed on his face.

"Only I think—"

"No, you don't think at all, Robert," she said, interrupting him. "Here, you have not had this house a year. You have furnished it elegantly. You have got into a fine neighbourhood. You are making new acquaintances every day (and Robert groaned as she spoke). You have been admitted into the best society, and now what do you propose?"

"Yes, but, Belle, I can't stand it. If times come on as hard as they were a couple of years ago—"

"Do as others do."

"Yes, but I haven't anything to do with."

"Now answer me one or two questions. You admit you are doing a good business?"

"Certainly; what I call a very good business."

"You have no idea it will grow any less, have you?"

"Not in the least. On the contrary, it is growing better every season. I shouldn't be at all surprised," he added, carried away by his enthusiasm, "if I made two thousand next year."

"You are in good credit now?"

"Perfectly."

"You are known as doing a good business?"

"Certainly."

"And now see what you propose. You want to give up the house, sell off the furniture, and go to boarding. What do you suppose would be the consequence?"

"Well?"

"Why, everybody would say you had failed, and was obliged to economise, and who do you suppose would trust you?"

Robert made no reply, but found refuge from the question by burying his face in his hands.

"Yes, and how everybody would crow over you, to think that you cut such a dash for a few months, and then went to pieces. Why, Robert, you couldn't do any thing in the world that could hurt you half so much. Just think, it would go like wildfire that you had failed, for nobody would believe you acted so far economy's sake."

"I don't know but you are half right," he said, languidly raising his head.

"Right! Do you think I don't know human nature? No, Robert; you have got a first-rate start. Keep the reins in your own hands. If people

only think you are rich, it is just as good as if you were. Take my advice. Of course you won't have so many expenses next year, now everything is settled. Why, Robert, to hear you talk, one would think you hadn't a pound in the world, nor a friend. Of course you can't live as you do now without some expense; but, as I said, only make folks think you are rich, and it's just as good as the money. Cut off some of the expenses; but give up the house! Why, Robert, you might as well give out that you were bankrupt at once. There's James, I'm sure you don't need him now that you don't keep a horse. Discharge him."

"So I will," replied her husband, springing up, and perfectly convinced by the reasoning of his wife.

Reader, there was a great deal of very bad advice, but a great deal of truth in what she said.

The result of the conference was that Mr. Arnold resolved upon economising by discharging a man servant for whom he never had any earthly use, and who was paid to black his boots and wait upon the table.

That was so long a step towards a reform in his expenditures, he did not think it necessary to take any more at present; and having reached this conclusion the conference was adjourned.

(To be Continued.)

A SWINDLE IN THE OLD COACHING DAYS.

We have received the following letter from a well-known old Western mail-guard, in which is given what is probably the original version of a swindling tale which has been going the rounds of the provincial journals:—

"From the time I was sixteen until I was nineteen years of age, I lived with an uncle at Castle Bytham, Lincolnshire.

"I frequently crossed the Great North Road, where by the 'Blue Ball,' Witham Common, I used to wait to see the coaches pass up and down, among which were the Glasgow and Edinburgh mails.

"These two coaches generally bowled along close together, and I remember, on one occasion, seeing the guard of one of them fast asleep.

"At that time I was a novice in coaching, and knowing little of coaching ways, I thought the man's position a dangerous one.

"Since then, however, I have become familiar to such sights.

"Before I was twenty I became guard on the Hark Forward coach, running from Stamford to Melton Mowbray, and have since then seen many curious scenes on the road, from which I give the following anecdote:

"In the pretty village of Iybridge, Devonshire, on the main road from Devonport to London, close to that little trout stream, the Eime, stood R—'s small snug hotel, which those who were in the habit of travelling by the Quicksilver mail will doubtless remember.

"One day a gentlemanly man, dressed in one of those long coats which buttoned down well towards the feet, and which at that time were fashionable, called at this hotel, and engaged a room for the night.

"After a capital dinner and mine host's best wine, he sent the waiter to ask if the landlord would join him in a cigar and a glass of grog; and so a pleasant evening was passed, and the two parted at bed-time, mutually pleased with each other, and the traveller giving orders to be called early in the morning, retired to rest.

"Punctual to his orders the boots called him in due course, but great was his consternation when he was re-summoned and informed by the gentleman that his breeches had been stolen during the night.

"Here was an embarrassing position for the inmate of a respectable hotel to be placed in.

"But Mr. R— speedily came to the rescue.

"In fact, the credit of his house demanded it, and a pair of his best breeches were placed at the stranger's service.

"So far all was satisfactorily arranged, but Mr. R—'s troubles were not yet over, and when the travelling gentleman informed him that in one of the pockets of the stolen breeches a five-pound note had been placed, he had no other course to save the honour of his house than to find another instead of the one lost.

"And so the gentlemanly traveller departed in peace.

"Of course Mr. R— determined to discover and punish the thief, and instituted the most searching inquiries.

"He never found the thief, however, but he learned that the strange gentleman had sold his

breeches at Ashburton the day before he honoured his hotel with a visit, and that the reason he could not find his own breeches in the morning was because he had got none on when he entered the hotel, his long coat so completely hiding his legs, that no one suspected his 'Bryan O'Lynn' like attire.

"So R— gave away his best breeches, and paid the obliging stranger five pounds for taking them.

"Somehow he never took kindly to travellers in those long-buttoned coats afterwards."

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

"They were taking the truck from the hook and ladder house in Dambury one day last week. An elderly party was observing the operation so intently that a bystander was led to observe:

"Did you ever belong to a fire company?"

"No, sir—no!" was the emphatic reply. "I don't see any fun in a fireman's life. But I once did," he mused. "I was living in London then, and was a pretty good-sized boy. I did not belong to any company, but I felt an interest in them all. The last fire I went to was in a four-story building. I was excited by the cries, and noise, and flames, and when I saw that one of the firemen was throwing a stream where he ought not to, I kindly directed the foreman's attention to the fact."

Here the narrator paused and sighed.

"And what did he say?" asked the listener.

"He didn't say anything."

"He didn't like it, did he?"

"I'm sure I don't know, but as he knocked me off the walk with his trumpet and stamped on me in the street, I have always believed that he took some offence at my advice. Still, he said nothing to that effect."

And the elderly party sighed again.

EXILED FROM HOME.

CHAPTER LI.

"Lord Chilton, said Miss Norreys, hear me! Hearken to my warning! This girl's mother was not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with your own honoured mother. There is a taint in this girl's blood—I tell you so—I swear it!"

"You know it of your own knowledge?" cried the viscount, wondering.

"I know it! It is my duty to warn you. This girl is good and pure in herself—poor child—but it is written that the sin of the parents shall be visited upon the children! She is a born outcast—a parish from her birth! Be warned, Lord Chilton, and let her go!"

"I would not give her up, not though the whole world were against her!" cried the viscount. "I would not let her go for any crimes of her parents, for any sneers of society, for any social ban upon herself. She is mine. She loves me, and I love her. I know her for the purest angel on Heaven's earth. Give her up? Never!"

He stood up, grand and noble, as he uttered those words, and Miss Norreys knew that her appeal was wasted.

He could not be moved from his allegiance to his betrothed—and the conviction brought her both sorrow and a rapture of delight.

"You say that you know that Gwen's mother was not what she should be," said the young viscount presently. "How do you know this, Miss Norreys? I thought you knew nothing of Gwen's history until I told you."

"You are right. Until you told me, I did not know that there was such a being as Gwendoline Winter in the world," again said Miss Norreys.

"Then how did you know of her parentage?"

Some explanation was due him. The lady comprehended its necessity.

She was silent a minute, but a glance into his pale, stern, waiting face quickened her speech. She looked exhausted, however, with the strain of her emotions, and her tones were low and feeble, as she said:

"Lord Chilton, your story told to me in the garden interested me greatly. I liked you from the first, and the romance of your love-affair greatly impressed me. I desired to help you. I will not deny that I had my share of woman's curiosity in the matter. I was anxious to discover your missing betrothed. And I sent my faithful Hindoo servant, Aga, to Yorkshire to make inquiries after Miss Win-

ter. He returned only this morning, having heard her history, and gained a clue to her refuge after leaving Lonomoor."

"And your 'knowledge' of Gwen's ill-parentage was then founded upon the report of your Hindoo servant?" demanded the viscount.

A spasm of pain convulsed the lovely olive face of the East Indian heiress. She bowed her head in assent.

"And you too, Miss Norreys, whom I believed superior to all fashionable weaknesses, are infected with the popular prejudices of caste to such an extent that you would condemn Gwen to a life of loneliness and sorrow because we do not know her parentage. You would punish the child for the sins of the parents, and condemn the poor, dead, young mother upon hearsay! I thank you for your interest in me. I appreciate it—but my friends must be Gwen's friends also!"

"I am her friend!" cried the lady. "I love her, Lord Chilton, almost as much as you do. Pardon my anxiety. It was as much for her as for you. I could not bear that you should marry her and then repent the marriage, and so break her heart. Let us go to her. Let her return with me. She shall find in me her best friend, next to yourself. She shall be married from my house."

Her eager pleadings conquered Lord Chilton's resentment.

He bent and raised her hand to his lips with chivalric courtesy.

"Gwen shall come to you, Miss Norreys," he said. "I can promise for her. We will drive over to Dunholm Castle this afternoon, as soon as you shall be sufficiently rested. Let me leave you now. You are very tired."

He took a step towards the door.

"One moment," Miss Norreys. "Lord Darkwood must not be informed of Miss Winter's true history. He must believe her still to be Miss Myner."

"Yes; every one must continue to believe that—to spare her scandal."

"That is all!" said the heiress, with a long-drawn sigh.

"I have a last word to say," said the young viscount. "Your very words, Miss Norreys, have convinced me of my duty in regard to the occupant of that grave in Penistone church-yard. I will trace out her history. I will prove her true and honourable, the victim of treachery in others, perhaps, but in herself virtuous and upright. I will clear Gwen's mother from all shadow of shame. I will devote myself to this task. You shall know—and Gwen shall know—the whole world shall know, if necessary—that the perfect flower I seek to gather and graft upon my own ancestral tree, came from a good stock, and not from some worthless wayside weed!"

There were words of entreaty on the lady's lips, expostulations and beseechings. She did not utter them, and he went forth strong in his resolve.

He hastened to his own room, and wrote a letter to a famous detective officer, whose name he well knew, and whose address was Scotland Yard, the headquarters of the detective police, and enclosed a cheque for a handsome amount as a retainer. The contents of the letter were an account in brief of the appearance at Lonomoor of the insane, wandering woman, who had there given birth to a child, and who had fled, a month later, in the storm of an awful December night. The dates were carefully appended.

"That woman lies buried in Penistone church-yard," the letter concluded. "A headstone bearing the name of Magdalen marks her grave. Her name was never known. I desire you to discover her name, origin, and history, and report the same to me without delay. Let the investigation be strictly secret, and as speedy as possible. The task seems difficult, but I trust that your sagacity will suffice to unravel the mystery."

He appended his name and address, and dispatched the letter by special messenger to Shrewsbury, to catch the first post to London.

CHAPTER LII.

THE experiences of the night which had witnessed the reunion of the two lovers were not all over for Gwen when she returned to her own rooms.

That night was big with events whose fatal gloom was destined to darken other lives besides her own.

But no premonition of fate came to warn her of approaching doom.

No presentiment of horror stirred her young soul.

Danger and terror were advancing swiftly upon her, and she did not suspect it.

She entered her sitting-room all joy and gladness, her pulses throbbing, her bright young face flushed with a strange, new tenderness, a brooding happiness in her purple eyes.

Her candles were burning on her writing-table as she had left them.

Her easy-chair was drawn up near the hearth. Her book lay open, just as she had put it down.

An hour ago she had sat in that chair; but all the world had changed for her in that brief space of time.

Her lover was not false to her, as she had believed; he loved her more than ever; he had found her; she was to become his wife very soon!

"Is there in all the world anyone so happy as I?" she thought. "God has been very good to me!"

She went into her bedroom and knelt for a few moments by her bedside.

When she returned to the outer room there was a reverent look in the lovely eyes, a new and strange meekness, a deeper tenderness than had possessed it before.

She sat down at her window, and drawing back her curtains, looked across the quadrangle at the ruins and the ball-room with eyes full of yearning.

The moon was going behind a bank of heavy clouds.

A great shadow began to enfold the ancient building.

Suddenly, as by magic, the lights streamed from the many windows of the ruins, and the soft strains of music floated out on the night air, and the dance went on merrily in the light of the forests of wax candles which had been prepared with a view to their possible requirement in just such emergency.

The time was nearly midnight. Soon after the candles were lighted, supper was served to the dancers.

Gwen watched for some glimpse of her lover, and was rewarded by seeing him once or twice as he passed a window.

The lights were not again extinguished. The moon thenceforward acted the coquette, now appearing with pale and mellow lustre, and again coyly hiding herself behind roving clouds, from the edge of which she peeped to watch the effect of her obscurement.

Gwen was not in a mood to go to bed. She could not sleep while Lord Chilton was in the house.

She resolved to await the departure of the guests and seek the Lady Georgina in her own rooms afterwards.

"I do not feel as if I could ever sleep again," she thought, in her happiness. "Georgina will speak of Ronald, I know. He is the handsomest man present to-night. She will talk of him; and I will tell her what he is to me, and that I am to leave her very soon, perhaps to-morrow."

Occupied with her pleasant dreams, she did not notice the dark figure of the Maltese valet skulking in the shrubbery near the ruins, but he was there, watching her keenly, and revolving in his mind certain plans for his own self-aggrandisement—which plans comprehended her misery.

"To-morrow," said Pietro to himself, "my Lord Chilton will come with Miss Norreys and take the girl away. To-morrow, the signore will learn that Miss Myner is in truth Miss Gwendoline Winter—the child of Miss Markham! Cospetto! To-morrow will be too late for me. I must work to-night. I must work now. The moon goes often into shadow. An hour from now she will go behind that great black bank of clouds, and be hidden for hours perhaps—long enough, at any rate, to answer my purpose! I will go to work!"

A little longer for deliberation—a little longer for the perfection in his own mind of his devilish purpose—and then he sneaked across the quadrangle, taking care not to show himself to the servants, who were still watching the guests in the ruins, and entered the door at which Gwen had entered, and ascended by the private staircase to the great corridor, off which the rooms of the Lady Georgina and her governess opened.

He knocked at Gwen's sitting-room door, and her sweet voice bade him enter.

He opened the door and went in.

Gwen arose, amazed at his unseasonable visit, and demanded what was wanted.

Her first thought was that Lord Darkwood or the Lady Georgina might have sent for her.

The fellow remained near the door, cringing, sleek, and stealthy, taking good care to keep out of the range of the window.

"If you please, Miss," he said, humbly, "Lord Darkwood sent me to you. I want to get a letter written, and I can't write in English, and his lordship told me this evening to come to you and you would write it for me."

"But this is no hour for letter-writing," said Gwen, utterly fearless, and not at all distrustful. "Come in the morning, Pietro, and I will write your letter."

"I came twice before this evening, Miss," lied the Maltese, "but you were absent." Gwen blushed vividly. "It is important to me to have the letter written to-night. My lord said that you had written letters for the maids and would for me. The hour is later than I thought. I will go—but the chance for the letter will not come to me so well again."

Gwen hesitated. She had written letters for the maids.

Lord Darkwood might think her disobliging if she refused to write for Pietro. But the hour—

"I hear a maid in the hall," said Pietro, comprehending the reasons of her reluctance. "Let me leave the door open—so, Miss! Now it is as if we were in the hall. It is but a few lines I want—they will take you but a minute!"

The door was open; the Maltese stood just within the threshold, humble and supplicating.

"What do you want written?" asked Gwen, wavering.

"It is a note to one of the maids," answered Pietro. "You see, Miss, I have been spooning after one of the housemaids, but I meant no harm. I never meant it to come to anything. And this very evening she says to me that we'll be married before Midsummer, and I was frightened. For I have a wife and seven children in Valetta, Miss. I went to my lord and he told me that I must get a letter to the girl to-night, or he'd discharge me! He said that I need not tell her all the truth about the wife and children, Miss, but I must let her know that no marriage could be thought of. And so if you refuse to write the letter to-night," he added, "I shall lose my place and my innocent family will lose their support. I cannot go to Mrs. Dover. She is in the ball-room."

"Stay where you are," she said, "and I will write your letter."

She opened her little portable desk, and took out a sheet of paper.

It was white, plain, and thick—the only kind she possessed.

She sat down, dipped her pen in ink, and said kindly:

"Now, Pietro, you may dictate your letter, and I will write it."

Pietro was quite ready for this demand.

"Write this," he said, dictating sentence by sentence the following epistle, which we will set down as it appeared when fully committed to paper in Gwen's peculiar and characteristic handwriting:

"My Darling:

"When we met and when we parted this evening, I wished that I might die in my great joy. For I love you above all others—you are my life, my soul! If it might be that I could belong to you and you to me—if our lives could only be united for ever and for ever, I should be supremely blessed. But in my happiness to-night I forgot that an obstacle lay between us—an obstacle which cannot be surmounted—an obstacle which must part us for ever."

"I can never be yours, darling, nor can I see your face again. I am not worthy of you. In time you will find some more fitting mate than I. I pray that you will soon forget me. I have said that I cannot see you again. By the time you receive this letter, I shall be far away—lost to you for ever. It will break my heart to see you—to listen to your entreaties—and know that I must for ever be a stranger to you."

"God bless you and keep you. Forget me—that is all I ask or pray for."

Pietro dictated this precious letter with his handkerchief at one eye, the other eye being employed in a vigilant watch against possible intruders.

"What shall I sign it?" asked Gwen.

"Do not sign it!" he exclaimed. "I would not have my name to it, for she will show it. Thanks, Miss, I shall never forget your kindness."

Gwen folded the unsigned letter into an envelope and brought it to him.

"You are going away, Pietro?" she asked.

"At daybreak, till this thing blows over, and she

will have got cool again," said Pietro. "It all came over me as you were writing, Miss, that I couldn't stay in the castle along of her if she should take on bad about her disappointment. I'll go give her this letter, and I'll tell the master after the guests are gone, and get a month's leave of absence. Thank you kindly, Miss. Good-night."

He placed the letter in an inner pocket of his coat, and bowing humbly, took his departure. The girl breathed more freely when he had gone.

She closed her door, and resumed her place by her window.

The dance was over, the guests were crossing the quadrangle on their way to the drawing-room.

A little later, their carriages rolled away, the Lady Georgina came upstairs and went into her own apartments, slamming her doors.

Gwen's mood had changed. She decided to defer her interview with Georgina until morning.

The lights disappeared from the ruins, the servants retired, silence fell like a mantle upon the castle and its occupants—and still Gwen sat at her window and dreamed her sweet girlish dreams.

The moon shone fitfully, now light, now darkness, covering the scene without.

Gwen's candles burned low, one expired in a guttering sound. The other began to flicker.

Her fire was gone out. The shadows began to thicken in the corners and draw nearer the slight figure at the darkened window.

And her waking dreams became sleeping ones. The lids drooped over the sweet, happy eyes; the proud little head drooped slowly to her breast.

And now her door opened very softly, an inch—another—and another.

A swarthy, sleek visage appeared at the aperture, and a pair of piercing eyes peered in.

"She is asleep!" said Pietro to himself, in sinister exultation. "The way is clear. The hour is come! Now for it!"

And like a snake he crept into her unconscious presence.

Owen did not awaken at the entrance of that sinister intruder.

His movements were noiseless, a pair of thick stockings encasing his feet.

He halted just within the door and contemplated her, his burning eyes piercing through the shadows beginning to enfold her.

Her head did not lift from its drooping position on her breast.

He could not hear her breathing, but he knew that she was sleeping.

The light that remained was expiring in a little sputtering pool of grease.

Only a faint red ember glowed sullenly amid the dead coals in the grate.

Pietro waited until the sputtering of the light had ceased—until darkness and silence filled the chamber—and then he crept forward, a deeper shadow among shadows, an incarnation of evil, bent upon the perpetration of some wicked and awful design.

The letter Gwen had written at his dictation was still in his pocket.

He drew it forth, stole to her desk, and laid the letter upon it.

It was unsigned, but it was unmistakably in her handwriting. No one could controvert that fact.

It was not addressed. Pietro's ingenuity made this lack of small account.

Scarcely daring to breathe, glancing over his shoulder at the sleeper with a cat-like vigilance, he dipped her pen in the ink and scrawled an address upon it.

Then, quickly, silently, and dexterously, he upset the ink-bottle upon the envelope, so that a thick pool of black ink lay upon its face, and dripped from it, drop by drop, to the floor.

And now he crept toward the young sleeper.

It was nearly two o'clock. Gwen, worn with emotions, tired in body and in mind, was sleeping profoundly.

His approach was silent as that of death. Hushing his breath, he paused behind her.

And now his sinister preparations became more evilly significant.

He withdrew a vial and a large handkerchief from his pocket.

Unstopping the former, he emptied nearly all its contents into the latter, and with a swift, pouncing movement he stooped forward and pressed the handkerchief to the girl's face.

She started, awakening. Her frightened eyes

saw through the gloom the dark face above her.

She made an attempt to struggle, but he held her as in a grip of iron, and the drug upon her face was a very giant in its strength and power.

Her breath came in wavering gasps, she lost sense and strength and comprehension together, and fell back limp and motionless against his arm.

The faint light that streamed in at the window fell upon his swarthy visage all aflame with exultation.

He laid her back in her chair, pressed the handkerchief to her nostrils, felt her pulse, and watched her breathing, for one long, silent, intense minute.

"She'll do!" he then said to himself. "The first step is taken!"

He glided towards her dressing-room, opened the door, and passed within.

The curtains were lowered, and a candle, very near its end, was burning on the dressing-table.

A single, long, comprehensive glance put the Maltese in possession of a knowledge of its occupant's effects and their position.

Her box was in a corner—open. Her travelling-bag was upon a small table.

Her wardrobe-door had its key in the lock.

Pietro moved silently forward and took up the hand-bag.

He opened the box and took out Gwen's few trinkets, her pocket-book, and some changes of linen, and deposited them in the bag.

Then, with this in his possession, he stole to the wardrobe, and took thence her hat, jacket, and a thick, warm shawl.

He returned with all these things to the sitting-room.

Gwen still lay as he had left her, limp and motionless, and a ray of moonlight streaming in at the window revealed that portion of her face which was uncovered, as marble white and rigid.

A momentary alarm seized upon him, but he ascertained that her pulse was beating feebly, and he breathed more freely.

He removed the drugged handkerchief to his pocket, placed her hat upon her head, and her shawl around her.

"Now comes the worst," he said to himself. "I must see if the coast is clear."

He crossed the floor and peered out into the hall.

All was silent without, and intense darkness filled the lonely passage.

The Maltese left the door ajar, and returned to his victim.

She was a slight creature, a little below the medium stature, and of light weight.

He was unusually tall, not stout, but very wiry and strong, and he could carry her in his arms without difficulty.

He wrapped her jacket over her head and face, attached her hand-bag to his waist-band, and gathered her up in his arms as if she had been a child.

He carried her into the hall and closed the door of her chamber softly.

He crept along the gloomy passage and silently descended the stairs.

The door at which he had entered had been secured by some careful servant.

He laid the girl down upon a wooden settle, and undid the bars and bolts; but, in spite of all his precautions, the chains would rattle, and the bolts made a harsh, grating noise.

He paused often to listen, but no one heard him.

The hour, and the fact that that wing of the building was lonely and isolated, were in his favour.

The door opened with a loud, creaking sound. Pietro picked up his charge again, and approached the threshold.

The moon was disappearing again behind heavy, black clouds.

The Maltese waited until the luminary was completely obscured, and a thick darkness covered the scene.

Then he passed out at the door, closed it behind him, and strode across the quadrangle in the direction of the ruins.

He abated nothing of his caution, although he had little fear of being seen.

No private rooms, other than those Gwen had occupied, overlooked the quadrangle.

The ruins were upon one side. Upon the other

was the great banqueting-hall, over which Gwen's rooms were situated, and between the two wings, ancient and modern, were state apartments, library, study, and a large room used as a cabinet for curiosities.

There was no danger that he would be seen, except by some watchman, and from that risk the opportune darkness screened him.

He gained the ruins unseen and unheard. He had left the door unlocked in view of this very need, and he pushed it open and entered the grim old precincts with his prey.

He fastened the door, and, still carrying her, although now her weight began to embarrass him, he strode along the stone corridors through the darkness, knowing every foot of the way, making for the interior of the ruins.

He had the keys in his possession, and did not pause in his march until he had made the descent of the old stone stair-case, and was safe in the vaults below.

Then at last he halted.

He laid his captive down upon the damp stone floor, wiped his face with his sleeve, and groped about for a lantern he had placed there shortly before.

He found it, and struck a match, lighting the lantern.

Then, removing the wrapping from Gwen's head and face, he turned the light of the lantern upon her.

She was still marble pale, her eyes were closed, but already signs of returning consciousness were apparent in the quivering muscles.

Gathering her up again in his arms, and taking the lantern also, Pietro hurried through the long, dark passages, his footfalls echoing, his light streaming out in advance of him, his face in shadows.

The way seemed interminable.

The dungeons had formerly been left open to the inspection of curious visitors, and all of Lord Darkwood's precautions had not been able to keep out visitors still, as had been proven by the experiences of the previous day.

The lady of Beechmont and her guests might desire to renew their explorations of the Castle dungeons, or others might seek to visit them.

It was Pietro's design, therefore, to take Gwen to one of the farthestmost dungeons, quite out of the view of possible visitors.

He threaded the labyrinth of passages and cells like one well used to them.

He passed the spot at which Miss Norreys had halted when hearing that ghostly cry, and tramped on through a corridor opening beyond, and halted before the door of a dungeon beneath the far tower.

Taking from his pocket a small chain to which was attached two massive keys, he unlocked the door and passed in.

The light of his lantern illuminated dimly a grim and terrible dungeon.

The rocky walls were dripping with damp. The rocky floor was wet also.

Far beneath the surface of the ground, no light penetrated to this cell, and the air within it was damp and unwholesome.

A slight effort had been made by Pietro to render the place habitable.

A heap of straw had been tossed in a corner, and upon it was thrown a pile of blankets.

A bench had upon it a loaf of bread and a jug of water.

There was a chair also, and a few toilet appurtenances.

But these few preparations—and these were all—only served to render the place more desolate in its appearance than before.

Pietro put down his lantern upon the bench, and deposited the girl in the chair.

He poured water in his hand from the jug, and sprinkled her face.

She was beginning to revive, and this proceeding hastened her recovery.

Pietro seized his lantern and retreated to the door, where he paused.

Gwen's features quivered, she stirred slightly, and then she came to herself with a long, sobbing sigh, and opened her eyes.

For a moment she stared in a weak surprise, as if she thought herself still dreaming.

She turned her head feebly, and her gaze took in the grim surroundings, and, last of all, the evil countenance of Pietro, as it was revealed in the glare of his lantern.

And now her look flamed up into a wild incredulity.

After one moment's horror-stricken silence she leaped to her feet, and passed her hands over her eyes twice—thrice—and uttered a strange cry that echoed through the vault and the corridor beyond.

"What does this mean?" she whispered, seeming to fear that she had gone mad. "Am I awake? Oh Heaven, have I lost my senses?"

Pietro smiled darkly.

Gwen's gaze became fixed upon him.

"Pietro?" she whispered.

"Yes, miss," he answered, his sleek voice only too horribly real.

"Pietro!" she repeated, her tones growing clear and shrill. "Where am I?"

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

SCHWEITZER'S SOLVENT FOR CELLULOSE.—Professor C. Neubauer recommends the following method for obtaining the well-known cupro-ammonium solution for technical use. He prepares an oxide of copper by the precipitation of sulphate of copper solution with caustic soda, in presence of sal-ammoniac. The resulting precipitate is thoroughly washed with water, first by decantation and then upon a filter, after which it is preserved under water. To prepare the cupro-ammonium solution the oxide above referred to, after thorough agitation with the water, is slowly added to a quantity of ammonia contained in another vessel. The addition of oxide is to be continued so long as the same is dissolved by the ammonia. The resulting deep-blue-coloured solution dissolves cotton wool at once, and in considerable quantity.

GRAMME'S MAGNETO ELECTRIC MACHINES.—M. Treves has recently made some determinations of the work consumed by Gramme's magneto electric machines when used for producing the electric light for illuminating purposes. Experiments were made with two machines, the illuminating powers of which were respectively equivalent to 1,850 and 800 Carcel burners. The work consumed by the first in terms of burner per second was 0.81 kilogrammetres, by the second 0.69 kilogrammetres; from which it appears that the expenditure of work is relatively much less for a large than a small machine. The machines worked steadily for an interval sufficiently long for the absence of sensible heating to be relied on. Under the conditions of working of the larger machine, the author states that the consumption of fuel represented only the hundredth part of oil, and the fiftieth that of coal-gas, requisite to produce the same illumination.

COAL FORMATIONS.—Mr. Wunsch stated that he had found numerous cylinders of trees completely flattened, lying across each other at various angles, with their bark compressed into less thickness than common pasteboard, and the carboniferous matter reduced to graphite, so that from three to four inches in thickness of this impure coal contained probably twenty generations of trees overlying each other. Now, if thirty years is allowed for the life of each tree, it must have taken six hundred years to form four inches of impure coal, or eighteen hundred years for the formation of a coal seam one foot thick.

A SIMPLE MICROSCOPE.—A simple and ingenious microscope is made as follows: Two metallic strips form a sort of forceps, in which two holes are bored opposite each other; a drop of glycerine is put in each of these holes, and the drops act as convex lenses, which can be adjusted at will by pressing the strips together.

IRON SHEETS THINNER THAN PAPER.—We have heard of iron as thin as paper, but have just had a packet of specimen iron sheets brought to our notice not half as thick as the sheet this is printed on. This sheet is 0.004 inch in thickness; the iron sheets we have received are 0.0015 inch thick, or only three-eighths of the thickness of the paper. At the same time the iron sheets are so tough as to be torn with difficulty, and so flexible as to bend with almost the facility of ordinary printing paper. These wonderful specimens of iron were made from the rough pig up to the rolled sheets by the Pearson and Knowles Coal and Iron Company, whose skilful manager, Mr. Hooper, has discovered a means of rolling these infinitesimally thin sheets in numbers without their sticking together.

IMPROVED PHOTO-CAMERO PICTURES.—The picture to be printed in oval or oblong angular shape, with fanned margin, and then to be gelatinised. After that we paste sandpaper on a piece of flint cardboard,

a little larger than the picture to be operated upon, rough side out, and cut the oval or oblong angle exactly by the copying mask out of the centre, place its sandpaper side on the picture and run through a roller press. The sandpaper will give the toned margin a dim appearance, while the surface of the picture will remain shining. If we wish to get a finer dim margin, we have only to put on the sandpaper a second time in another position and press again. Instead of sandpaper, paper lace or woven stuffs may also be used, but the former in most cases produces the best effect.

THE ANCESTOR OF MAN.—In reference to the question from which of the quadrumanous did man originate, Professor Haeckel, in his recent work "The History of Creation," gives his opinion that the human race is a small branch of the group of catarrhina, and has developed out of long since extinct apes of this group in the old world. And when on this subject, he refers to Professor Huxley's remarks, which show that man is, nearly as much as the ape, a four handed animal; for various tribes of men—the Chinese boatman, the Bengalee workman, and the negroes when climbing—use the great toe in the same manner as the monkey, and therefore the possession of only a single pair of hands is not to be looked on as a characteristic of the human race. He also points out a fact necessary to be observed by unscientific people, namely that none of the manlike apes are to be regarded as the parent of the human race, but that the apelike progenitors of the human are long since extinct. In concluding his work, Professor Haeckel remarks on the desire of some who are not actually opponents of the doctrine of descent.

"They wait," he says, "the sudden discovery of a human race with tails, or of a talking species of apes." But such manifestations, the author observes, would not furnish the proof desired, and unthinking persons would be provided with as satisfactory (?) arguments as they nowadays employ in hurling their defiance against all who are evolutionists.

THIEVES' CHARMS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

If ignorance be the parent of superstition, the mental condition of our criminal classes must be something deplorable, for the belief in charms and omens prevails among them to a far greater extent than is generally imagined in these days of popular intellectual enlightenment. But there is nothing strange in this. From the earliest time crime and superstition have invariably been found closely allied, the apparent fearlessness displayed by many infamous characters being attributable less to their personal courage than to an implicit faith in the efficacy of some charm possessed by them.

Only the other day, in one of the metropolitan police courts, a police detective, giving evidence in a case of alleged robbery, produced a piece of coal which he had taken from the waistcoat pocket of the accused, and stated that practical thieves carried that "kind of thing as a charm for good luck." They did the same in the times of the old Bow Street runners, and it is said that several of the most notorious criminals captured by Townsend were in the habit of carrying peculiarly-shaped black pebbles, which they fancied would insure their immunity from detection and inevitable arrest.

About the period when Hogarth produced his famous pictures of "The Idle and Industrious Apprentices" the belief in charms was almost universal among criminals of every class, from the "gentleman highwayman" to the humble footpad, professional fortune-tellers and wandering gipsies being the principal sources from whence the supply of these superstitious articles were obtained. Pieces of bone from the skeletons of malefactors hung in chains were in great request among thieves of every grade, who believed that the possession of these would render certain the success of any nefarious enterprise in which they might happen to be engaged. The hand of a convicted murderer was regarded as a most powerful charm, one which never lost its efficacy. It was known as "the hand of glory." Possessed of this, a criminal imagined himself secure against failure in the perpetration of the most audacious deeds, nor did repeated captures of evil-doers with such charms concealed about their persons speedily destroy the faith of the dangerous classes in these dry, survival relics of fallen humanity. The hands were generally cut from the bodies of murderers recently executed, and it was often found necessary to station guards near the gibbets for the purpose of preventing such mutilations of dead criminals.

Pieces of the rope with which a criminal has been hung are sometimes regarded as charms, a fact which explains the readiness with which a recently used halter can occasionally be disposed of, and which has

frequently been attributed to the existence of a morbid taste among purchasers, although we doubt whether Marwood will ever gain for his "hemp collars" such prices as were obtained during the period when executions were of almost daily occurrence.

Locketts containing the hair of executed criminals were also regarded as charms, and, according to an account in an old magazine, even portions of the shroud in which some notorious criminal who had escaped the full penalty of the law was buried, were sought for similar purpose. The belief in charms appears, singularly enough, to have been less prevalent amongst female criminals than amongst those of the opposite sex, but their deficient faith in this respect was more than counterbalanced by their habitual custom of "consulting the fates," in the shape of a pack of playing cards, before commencing any illegal enterprise. But they were not above wearing finger-rings or brooches containing the hair of notorious robbers and murderers, or carrying white pebbles picked from a running brook during a successful plundering foray.

The faith in divination by means of cards survives to the present day, although the efficacy of this mode of determining the advisability of attempting a robbery is not so generally believed in, especially among the more educated class of female thieves.

But if the "fates" are less frequently "consulted" than formerly, the old belief in omens prevails largely among habitual criminals of both sexes.

If a professional burglar, while on a housebreaking expedition, experiences, as is not unlikely, an involuntary feeling of trembling at the unexpected appearance of a policeman, it is regarded, and with very good reason, that the enterprise cannot be prosecuted without increased risk.

In one of the Northern counties a well-known housebreaker was in the habit of walking through one of the bye-streets of the town at a certain hour of the day and counting the number of people met by him. If the number was odd he regarded it as a sign that success would attend his next exploit, an even number being looked upon as an indication of failure.

During the earlier part of the present century a notorious pickpocket watched every seventh person who passed him until he elected a likely victim. Another member of the same fraternity ascribed his arrest to his having forgotten to leave at home a snuff-box belonging to a companion who had, during the previous week, been sentenced to transportation. The tossing of coins is frequently resorted to for the purpose of determining whether an attempt at house-breaking or other form of crime shall be made or not. Some thieves keep a coin—usually a penny-piece—expressly for this purpose in their pockets.

The belief in the "evil eye," so common among the criminal classes of the last century, is comparatively little known among those who at the present moment form our great social problem, and is found principally in the rural districts, where superstition and crime are more closely associated than in the metropolis.

There is more than one district where the fear of the "evil eye" will make an arrant coward of the boldest poacher, and where stolen ducks and pilfered linen have been mysteriously restored to their owners on its becoming noised about that the evil eye was on the evil-doers.

SPORT IN JAMAICA.

JAMAICA cannot be called a very "happy hunting ground" for the sportsman. Not that the creatures worth shooting are very few and far between, but because the going after them is generally a matter of no small trouble and difficulty.

As a rule, you have either to "do Blondin," with your gun as a balancing pole, upon the mangrove roots in foetid swamps—thereby running the risk of a ducking in dirty water, or a touch of yellow fever for your pains—or, braving the casualties of strangulation by withes and lianes, and of leaving all your apparel behind you, sticking to the prickles of the "wait-a-bit," you have to climb and jump like a cat among the rocks and fallen logs of the hilly woods. Now and then, if the marksman does not fear sunstroke, he may get some sport in the open pastures and savannahs of the low land plains; or he may occasionally mildly fire away while quietly sitting, in the cool of the afternoon, under his own home porch, or beneath a tree in the yard.

Pigeons and petrels are then going home to roost; and, as at certain times they are in regular flocks, a considerable bag may sometimes be obtained in this luxurious and easy, if not very sportsmanlike, way.

But there is also a bright side to the picture. Exercise is good for the health, even in a warm climate; anything to dissipate the tedium of living in a place where the inhabitants—apart from their business—usually do nothing. But sit and drink and smoke—must be looked upon as a boon; and, if you have any appreciation for the beautiful, the views of magnificent scenery which you meet with in your sporting rambles in most parts of the island, alone repay you for all trouble and fatigue.

The grandeur of the Jamaica mountains surprises and delights all who go into the interior of the island. Small as the place is—only about 150 miles long by some 50 broad—there are several peaks over 5,000 feet high; one of them, the Blue Mountain, reaching an altitude of nearly 8,000 feet.

The valleys are deeply cut and numerous, and generally have winding along each of them a rocky rivulet or torrent course. Their sides are mostly clothed with virgin forests, the sombre tints of which contrast beautifully with the bright green patches of guinea-grass, which here and there have been cleaned off and planted.

Sides of the hills have a ruddy or purple hue, from the colour of the particular growth upon them, or from the exposed crags of red rocks; while occasionally a rugged white limestone cliff, mottled with patches of green vegetation, breaks into view.

The various and changing tints seen upon the mountains during the brilliant southern sunrise and sunset, produce an effect which is simply superb.

The biggest game in Jamaica is the wild pig. These often come at nights from their forest fastnesses, when the mangoes and other fruits, being in season, strew the ground in true tropical profusion.

At other periods of the year they help themselves freely to the yams and plantains in the negro provision-grounds, where they leave numerous uprootings and other evidences of their presence.

"THE CROSSNESS."

This judicious mother who always spoke of any disarrangement of her children's temper as "the crossness," and administered small and bitter doses of medicine for it until it departed—treating it, in fact, as tenderly and sympathetically as she would the measles or the whooping-cough—has been often well spoken of, I believe.

Whenever I think of her, I say to myself:

"What a wise woman she was, and how much better it would be if we could look upon 'the crossness' as an affliction to the one whose temper is out of joint, as well as to those about him."

"The crossness" is certainly a sort of disease. The naturally ill-tempered or bad-natured do not suffer from it.

They are always ready to say bitter things, to do evil deeds, and they say and do them coolly—often with an unpleasant smile.

They are people to hate, in a righteous sort of way, as one hates Satan; and the less sympathy one has with them the better.

But "the crossness" often comes to warm-hearted, loving people, and if you could see into their souls you would always discover that there was some physical cause for it—sleeplessness, over-fatigue, or the nervousness produced by anxiety.

They are really ill, though they do not know it.

All their real sweetness is hidden by a great, black cloud—and ungracious answers fall from their lips, and they find fault with good puddings, and are offended by pleasant jokes.

Well would it be if people understood that all this was "the crossness."

Perhaps it might not do to censure with the sufferer, or to offer the bitter dose of rhubarb; but the poor creature does not deserve ill-usage and reproaches.

If it is a person of whom one should speak as "he," a golden silence is the best application.

If it is "she," and not "he," quaffer a little, but not earnestly; after a while tears will come, and the crisis of "the crossness" will be past.

"The crossness," more than any other affliction, requires the use of the golden rule as a remedy. Were you never cross yourself? You, who of course have the best disposition possible, are you not conscious of unreasonable low-spirits, and a general feeling that the world has conspired to injure you? How would you like "to be done by" yourself on such occasions? That is the question to ask. And don't be too hard on poor Mr. Jones when, after a long day in town, where he has seen nothing of the people who were to pay him money, and altogether too much of those who wanted it of him, he comes home with "the crossness."

Remember how badly you had it yourself, that morning after you were awake with the baby all night.

M.K.D.

THE STARLING.

I HAVE received the following for publication:—"In the spring of 1870 I brought up a young starling from the nest, keeping it in a closed basket in my room."

"Sometimes I took it out of doors to let it hop about on the grass, when one day, to my despair, it flew out of sight, and I never expected to see it again; however, early next morning, when I was dressing, I heard a screeching outside my window and saw the starling fluttering about, trying to get in; it finally settled on the plants and let me take it in and feed it, after which for many weeks it regularly flew in at 5.30 (or 5 a.m., as it got later in the year) with a loud scream, and began to peck the food provided for it."

"One morning, finding I was not awake to attend to it, it pecked my eyelids to attract my attention. It became as fond of me as a dog, and would come down from the trees when called and settle on my shoulder, and would destroy me two or three fields off and come to meet me."

"Very often he would find out which room I was in and come and warble at the window, or perch on the venetian blind. I have often written letters with him sitting on my arm, and one day, while doing so, he pecked the pen suddenly out of my hand, and flew out of the window with it to his favourite tree."

"When I called him back he returned, but without the pen. I could generally make him come at my call for either the tree or the roof of the house, but I never succeeded in making him talk, which was my original reason for bringing him up; but he would imitate the songs of other birds I had (canaries, etc.) admirably, and was extremely fond of a bullfinch I had, and in the summer often slept outside its cage, resting against the wire. One day he was amusing himself as my room with pulling out the spilt from a china vase, when pecking at them too violently the vase fell down and broke, which so startled him that he rushed out of the window with a screech and never reappeared all day."

"He would feed from my lips and let me kiss its pretty speckled breast, and gave me gentle pecks on my lips in return."

"He looked on my room chiefly as his own territory, and, if I shut the window, would peck at it with his beak to be opened."

"Very often in accompanying me to the garden, where my aviary was, he would start on my shoulder, then fly on to the garden-rail and back again, catching me up, and he used often to sit perched on my hat as I walked along."

"Being told that starlings migrated in the winter, I thought it best to confine him in the aviary, where he at once became quite wild and would not let me touch him, and he made sad havoc amongst my canaries."

F. C. M.

MY LADY, AND MY LADY'S

MAID.

It was at a little fishing town that I first met Madeline Grey. There had been a wild storm on the day previous, such an one as no corner of old ocean can furnish but that same stormy Bay of Biscay, which stretches off to the west of the rough Breton coast.

The sky was indeed clear, but a heavy surf was beating against the rocks, and churning itself into foamy foam that tossed high in the sunlit air, and scattered itself in showers of spray that were brightened by a thousand prismatic changes.

The town was a small one. There was but one hotel.

Along the shore were scattered little cottages of fishermen or peasants, in which, so beautiful was the wild uproar of the coast, many a traveller like myself had found a temporary refuge.

The only house of any pretensions in the place stood half a mile back from the shore, and was simply a plain but well-kept villa, surrounded with gardens and orchards, and half-hidden in clumps of poplars and willows.

It had not escaped the look of quaint antiquity which everything in Brittany wears, yet I knew that it was in fact modern. And it too had its lodgers.

On this particular morning, as I was rambling along the rocks, taking particular care to keep out of the way of the dashing surf, I spied the pretty English lady who lodged at the Poplars, coming down

the shore, having with her her two children—a boy of six, and a girl somewhat younger.

I had often seen her out before, but accompanied by a nurse; but this time she was alone.

There was a dreamy look about her face, as of one given over to the habitual contemplation of a great sorrow, and I had often noticed that she seemed to pay little heed to her children even, to whom it was still evident that she was much attached.

But the good Jeanne who was their good bonnie was quite equal to the trust reposed in her, and guided and soothed and governed her little charges with real motherly tact.

But to-day, for some reason, Jeanne had remained at home, and the young mother, with her charming, dreamy face, was attempting, for a rare thing, that constant and alert supervision which young children always need in any place of possible danger, while at the same time I could see, or fancied I could, what her own mood was one of more than usual abstraction.

At last little Guy, who was intent upon gathering the sea treasures which the storm had cast upon our shores, spied a green crab crawling awkwardly over the sand, and with a loud cry rushed off to inspect it more closely.

His mother hastened after him, leaving the little girl for an instant alone.

I, too, was watching the boy, who was evidently venturing dangerously near the great breakers which a rising tide was dashing in upon us with a thunderous roar which utterly drowned all sound of human voices.

"Guy, Guy!" screamed the frantic mother, "come here at once!" But the boy, used to long romps with Jeanne, and seeing only in his mother's haste a challenge for a race, kept on up the shore, careless of his nearness to the surf, and looking back now and then to make sure that he was distancing his mother.

I was rather anxiously watching for the result, when some sudden impulse caused me to turn just in time to see that the little girl, who had been left alone, had grown tired and frightened with her solitude, and in hastening to overtake her mother had instinctively wandered too near the shore, where a great wave had suddenly taken her off her feet.

I screamed involuntarily, and rushed to rescue her before the next roller should carry her off with its undertow.

I was too late, however, and before the mother was aware of her baby's danger the little thing was struggling with the boiling currents that rushed in and out among the cruel jagged rocks of the coast.

It was not a moment for deliberation.

Fortunately, I had some knowledge of swimming, and throwing off as I ran the light shawl which I wore, I plunged in after her.

I know not how it was accomplished, but in two minutes I felt the child in my grasp, and myself buffeted among the rocks and waves, whose fury I realised as it had never been possible for me to do before.

The roaring of the tide, the boiling and hissing and seething of the surf in which I was plunged, filled my ears to the exclusion of every other sound and sense, and in the turmoil I lost consciousness.

When I came to myself again, I was lying on the ground under a great willow which stood a few yards from the shore, and a dozen people were bending over me and filling my ears with their chatter.

Breton French, Parisian French, and pure, well-spoken English, all mingled in the hubbub.

My first thought was for the baby.

"Did you save her?" I asked, as eagerly as my trembling voice would allow.

"You saved her," said a gentleman near me; "and now we hope that you are saved. Only you must keep very quiet. Don't mind in the least what we are doing. You will be well taken care of, and all without a thought of your own."

The voice was strong and comforting in its every tone, and I felt so wearied and ill that it was good simply to close my eyes and trust it.

Presently I felt myself lifted off the ground by strong arms, all moving under the direction of that same firm and gentle voice, and placed upon some sort of rude litter.

Then I was borne along, by a gentle swaying motion which yet reminded me sufficiently of the rocking of the sea to be painful to me, towards—somewhere, I knew not where.

The motion must at last have reduced me again to unconsciousness, for the next thing I remember was opening my eyes to find myself lying upon a bed in a quaint and pretty room that I had never seen before, while about my bedside two people—a nurse and a physician, I judged—were busying themselves with restoratives.

"Where am I?" I asked, faintly.

I got no answer, for I had spoken in English; but old Jeanne—for I had by this time recognised in the nurse the bonnie of the pretty English children—with a fervent thanksgiving to Heaven ran to the door and made known the fact to the waiters outside that mademoiselle was recovering.



[THE RETURN.]

In an instant Madeleine Grey was at my side. I shall never forget the depths upon depths of feeling which revealed themselves in her luminous gray eyes as she sat down by my bedside, and, taking my hand in hers, began silently kissing and crying over it.

I knew then, without a word, that, not knowing my own residence, or possibly thinking that a fisherman's cottage was not the best place in which to work for my recovery, she had had me brought to her own lodgings at the Poplars.

"They say you must not talk yet," she said, at last; "but I may at least tell you that you are in the hands of friends who owe to you what is dearer to them than life itself, and that you will be cared for at present without a thought upon your part. Is there anything in especial that I can do—any friend to be informed, any letter to be written, any commission to be executed?"

"No," I replied; "I am quite alone. In an hour or two I shall be well. I only need a little time in which to get over the shock."

With many kind assurances of friendship, she left me then.

But the shock had been greater than I had realised, and it was not until the next day that I began to feel equal to getting on a dressing-gown and sitting for a few minutes by a window.

Even then internal injuries made themselves manifest, which indicated pretty strongly that it would be at least a week or ten days before I could comfortably be removed to my rather straitened lodgings.

Meantime nothing could be kinder than the attentions bestowed upon me by Madeleine Grey and her brother, who I found was the gentleman who had superintended my removal from the scene of the accident to this place.

Aubrey Wallace was a clergyman. I have usually found clergymen, especially the priests of an establishment, very commonplace people; but in Aubrey Wallace I was immediately aware of a notable ex-

ception to what had passed with me for a rule. There was nothing whatever about him of the self-inflation, the snobbishness, the patronising air, which characterise so many, especially of the rural clergy.

He was not only a thorough gentleman in breeding, but I knew him at once for a man whom deep grief has made familiar with the highest spiritual consolations.

And it is that, after all, which redeems people from the commonplace.

No amount of merely material exaltation, of the possession of wealth, or power, or influence, or even beauty, is sufficient to raise any man or woman from the ranks of the ignoble.

Only the presence of a power within the soul which can dominate the material, the merely human, and prove a clear and conscious affinity for spiritual and divine things, can do that.

It was this conscious superiority of soul which beamed in every ray of Aubrey Wallace's eye, and spoke in every tone of his voice, which made him almost irresistibly attractive.

Madeleine wore no widow's weeds, yet I neither saw nor heard any thing of her husband.

This was certainly not in itself a strange circumstance.

A thousand reasons might exist for his absence, but during the week of my convalescence several little incidents transpired which gave me an impression that the circumstances of her married life were peculiar; that, in fact, the deep sorrow which it was plain to see hung over the life of Aubrey Wallace was not a sorrow which touched so deeply the springs of his own life as of his sister's.

It is not to be understood, by what I have said, that Aubrey Wallace was a gloomy man.

On the contrary, I have seldom seen a man who was so uniformly and consistently cheerful. Often his spirits rose to gaiety.

Yet through it all there were manifest traces of a chastened and tempered spirit, which gave that curious

sense of exaltation to him which I have before noticed.

The days slipped by, and I was made so thoroughly welcome, and so surrounded by proofs of gratitude and friendship, that two weeks elapsed before I began to think seriously of going back to my own lodgings, or rather of taking up again my solitary line of march, for the time at which I had intended to leave had already passed. But Madeleine still pleaded for delay.

"You are by no means strong yet," she said; "and why need you hasten away from us? I want you to stay," she added, with a little blush, "and see my husband."

"Nothing could delight me more than that," I said.

"And is there really any reason why you must go?" asked Mr. Wallace, with kind earnestness.

"There is scarcely a necessity in the case," I said. "I fancy the friends from whom I am temporarily separated will do very well without me, and really, as they are at present fulfilling an engagement with acquaintances of their own, who are strangers to me, I should be willing enough to forego their company for another month. Then I must meet them in Rome. Not a day of Rome would I miss for any consideration. Belgium, where they now are, has, I confess, fewer attractions, especially since I have already spent some weeks there. The climate of the Low Countries has indeed a depressing effect upon me, and, as I am travelling in search of health, I made this excursion to the coast in the hope of finding a more bracing air."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Wallace, smiling, "it would be the height of folly to go hence until you are fully recovered. Let us consider it settled that you are to remain with us until the last moment before your friends set out for Rome."

When I had so far confessed their friendship as to accept this proposition, Madeleine, who had charmed me hitherto with the dainty grace and shyness of her manner, even while she was most earnest in her friendly offices, became at once more unreserved in her friendship for me.

The day fixed for Mr. Grey's arrival approached rapidly, and, though very little was said, I could see that Madeleine looked forward to it with intense and rather unusual anticipation.

On the evening before his expected arrival, I found Madeleine busy arranging flowers in all possible nooks and corners of the house, by way of decoration.

I had stolen into the drawing-room quietly, and surprised her with a smile upon her lips and a light in her eyes which I had never seen there before. Evidently, now that she was alone by herself, and busy with work for the beloved one, she was letting her joy overflow.

"How happy you are," I said to her, "in this husband of yours. Is he really such a paragon?"

She looked up from the tube-roses which she was arranging with a countenance perfectly transfigured with innocent joy.

"Ah!" she said, "you have never heard the story of my life, else you would not ask that question. Shall I tell it to you here in the twilight, with the odour of the flowers all about us?"

"Indeed!" I said, "nothing could please me better."

"Well, then, wait only till I have finished arranging this fiery mass of gladiolas, and then I shall be done with my flowers, and we may sit down here in this window, where the moonlight will soon be streaming in, and I will tell you my story."

We were shortly arranged as she had indicated, and she commenced her story thus:

"Aubrey and I were the only children of a clergyman of the Established Church in the north of England.

"Our mother died when we had scarcely yet entered our teens, and for the next six or eight years we were thrown much together, and learned to love each other in our isolation as few even of brothers and sisters ever do.

"Papa, who was an excellent scholar, taught Aubrey at home until he was ready to enter the university, and then came the first separation of our lives.

"It nearly broke my heart, and Aubrey, I am certain, only felt it less than I did because he was so much more occupied, for he was a very hard student. When Aubrey had been two years at Oxford papa died very suddenly.

"Of course Aubrey came home to the funeral, and then it was found that nearly all our income had ceased at papa's death.

"There was only remaining a few hundred pounds a year from a legacy which had come to mamma, and which was to have been my dower. But of course now I felt that Aubrey had the better claim to it, especially as without it he could not possibly finish his education.

"The difficulty was to make him accept it, since the right to it was legally vested in me. I thought

it over a good deal in the long night that I lay awake just for that purpose.

"It grew more and more clear to me that Aubrey must take that money, and at last I arranged a plan by which I thought I might succeed in inducing him to do it.

"The first thing was to get him to go back to Oxford for the term which had only just commenced. He was much opposed to doing so, but I argued that inasmuch as his expenses were mainly paid in advance, it really would be a wicked waste not to do it. He finally acquiesced in the plan, and then I felt that the difficulty was half over.

"No sooner was Aubrey well out of the house than I sat down and wrote an advertisement for the London papers, describing myself as well as I could, and cataloguing my small store of accomplishments, and stating that I wished a position as governess or lady's maid, or in fact any respectable position where I might honestly earn my bread. What did I care where I was, or what position I held, so I was comfortably clothed and fed during these few years when Aubrey was getting his education? By-and-bye he would be ordained and get a living somewhere, and then I could go and live with him, only meantime I hoped to be able to conceal my stratagem from him and all his friends, lest his social standing might be injured if the truth were known.

"Fortune favoured me wonderfully—at least I thought so at the time—for within a week I received an answer from the dowager Lady Althorpe, who had been a friend of my mother's, saying that she was in want of a companion who would be willing sometimes to act as lady's maid, and thought I might suit.

"I knew very well that Lady Althorpe was old and crabbed, and had an ill name for temper, but that was little compared with the fact that I hoped to be able to make some sort of arrangement with her, for the sake of my family, which should conceal in some degree the actual nature of my service with her, which I understood perfectly, in spite of fine words, would be menial enough. I would serve her most faithfully, and for a sum simply sufficient to clothe me, if she would in return help me to shield my affairs from the too inquisitive gaze of the world.

"She wrote me in reply to my letter, coolly, yet not wholly ungraciously. She would be glad, she said, to help me, for the sake of old acquaintance. She had, however, very little sympathy with romance or sentiment. If I came to her, I was not to expect too many favours on account of my birth and connections, which in fact must be kept an utter secret from every soul in the house. The salary she named was meagre enough; but, on the other hand, she reminded me that if I had really determined upon making this sacrifice for my brother, it was something that I should be with a lady, who would understand and respect my character, and, moreover, she assured me that I need have no fear of discovery, since she was going North for the next year; that indeed she should probably remain away from London and from London's society for two or three years.

"In that time Aubrey would be through with his studies, and then I could no doubt resume my own again, and live as I pleased. So I eagerly accepted Lady Althorpe's offer.

"I have, as you may have noticed, a very buoyant disposition. But for it I know not how I should have passed those first months at Althorpe. The place was lovely enough in itself. As I remember it now, it seems to me that I ought to have been more appreciative of at least the natural beauties which surrounded me, but I knew that they scarcely entered as an alleviation into the sum of my daily life. I think I learned then and there, and few souls ever do realise it in this world, how utterly impossible it is for outward circumstances to bring happiness.

"What was the trouble, you ask? Well, to begin with, I found that Lady Althorpe, little as I had ever heard of her that was good, was in reality a more unendurable person than I had ever before imagined could exist. She was not wholly to blame, poor woman. Born an heiress, and married in her teens to a peer twice her age, and who had squandered a fortune in dissipation, and had married a brewer's daughter simply to gain with her hand the means for further riotings, she had led a hard life. Her children—and she had borne many—had all died, save one son, and he was too much like his father to add to the comfort of any home.

"He had, moreover, married, in his early youth, a girl who had pleased his eye, and whose station, for she was a lord's daughter, made it impossible for him to reach her person in any other way. But Lady Grace had brought him very little money, and before the first year of their married life was over he had tired of her, and hated her because she stood in the way of his marrying an heiress, and so repairing his fallen fortunes.

"He could not be induced to live with her, and as just now he manifested some design to commence a Parliamentary career, which might be hoped to steady

and possibly reform him, his mother had prudently formed the plan of residing with Lady Grace for a year or two upon their estates in the North, which would not only keep Lady Grace out of her husband's way, but would ensure an economy of living which would leave him all the free to meet the expenses of his town life.

"Lady Grace was, however, no passive participant in this plan. She was not more fond of her husband's society than he of hers, but she had an ambition to shine in society, and this enforced seclusion in the midst of the Northern hills galled her severely.

"Under the circumstances, you can imagine that the household was far from being a happy one, and what between the malice and the whims of Lady Grace, and the downright tyranny of her mother-in-law, I led a fearful life.

"Yet I was willing to bear it because I could write to Aubrey that now that Lady Althorpe had invited me to make her house my home, he was quite free to accept my little income, and so finish his education.

"And all the time the dear fellow did not dream that instead of being Lady Althorpe's guest, I was in reality her paid servant.

"Meantime I comforted myself by the reflection that two years would soon pass away, and then Aubrey would be ordained; and I felt sure that with all his friends a living would soon be found for him, and I should take my own again, and all would be well.

"We had passed two winters already at Althorpe, when Lady Grace broke loose from restraint, and declared her intention of going to London for the season. In spite of all that could be said, she would go, and in April she actually set off to join her husband in the metropolis. When she returned in October it was without her husband, but in her train a dozen or more of her acquaintances, who had come out, the gentlemen for the pheasant-shooting, which was exceptionally good at Althorpe, and the ladies for social purposes.

"Lady Althorpe was furious at this inroad. Of course the establishment must be doubled to entertain all these guests, and the system of economy which she was practising was shattered at a blow. With youth and good spirits on my side, I rather enjoyed this irruption of gay society in our midst. For two years I had seen no face but that of the ladies of the family and their servants, and now and then the rector and his lady, when they had been bidden to tea. It was rather jolly, I thought, to hear the ring of merry laughter, and see the gentlemen in their gay hunting-suits lounge through the park. I could even now and then steal out of a morning and watch the meeting of the hounds, for there was more than one fox-hunt that fall; but for all this sympathy with the gay doings of Lady Grace, I gained only the intensified wrath of Lady Althorpe. She would not discharge me. I was too valuable a servant to be lost in such a way as that; neither would she deprive herself of the pleasure of wreaking upon me her vengeance.

"But I had a source of consolation of which Lady Althorpe did not dream. Among the gay crowd who had followed Lady Grace from London was Hubert Grey. I had a way of stealing out into the shrubbery after my lady was dressed for dinner, and when the guests were sure to be all in the drawing-room, and there one evening I encountered, to my surprise, the young man I have named. I was frightened as I saw him approach me, and was about to flee when he called to me.

"Miss Wallace, please do not leave. I particularly want to have a few words with you."

"I was greatly surprised to think that he should even know my name, but seeing that he was a gentleman, I lingered for a moment.

"To quiet your apprehensions at once," he said, "let me produce my credentials. See, I have here a letter for you from your brother, who is my dear friend."

"Oh," I said, "do you know Aubrey? Then I am very glad to see you. But how did you know I was his sister?"

He smiled.

"That was not difficult to learn," he said. "In the first place, Aubrey had acquainted me with the fact that you were here, under Lady Althorpe's patronage."

"I blushed crimson at that, for of course he had expected to find me a guest in the drawing-room, and not in the place of a servant."

"He looked at me a little severely, yet still with goodness in his face, and continued:

"I did not, however, expect to find you in the position which you apparently occupy."

"I broke down then with tears and pleading.

"Oh, I begged, 'do not tell Aubrey. It would break his heart if he knew it. Besides, he would be very angry. But what could I do? He would not take the money necessary for his education, if he supposed that I were supporting myself, and you

can see for yourself how necessary it was that he should finish his course. I meant to do something of this sort, and you see Providence favoured me in sending me to Lady Althorpe, who used to know my mother, and was willing to help me for her sake?"

"He smiled rather cynically at that.

"I think Lady Althorpe's motives are certainly open to question," he said. "Do you find her a gentle mistress?"

"Pardon me," I said, rather haughtily; "we will not speak of Lady Althorpe, if you please. Will you tell me about Aubrey? Oh, how much I want to see him!"

"Yet the poor fellow fancies you are forgetting to love him as you used, because you do not urge him to visit you. He would have accompanied me on this visit, if your recent letters had not so strongly urged upon him the necessity of his avoiding such a journey, for economy's sake?"

"But do you not see," I said, "that I could not have him come and find me?"

"Yes, I can see your motive very plainly, but he, poor fellow, does not; and, pardon me, Miss Wallace, but I think you are doing very wrong. You are too young and inexperienced to know it, but when this affair becomes known, as it is impossible that it should not be, sooner or later, it cannot fail to do your brother great injury. The world will never believe that he was not aware of your position here, and will never forgive him for accepting your aid, rendered in such a manner, in obtaining his education."

"But what shall I do?" I said. "Aubrey must have the money, and therefore I must support myself, and really I do not know how I could do it any more surely than I am doing here."

"It is amazing," he said as if half to himself, "that either the dowager or Lady Grace—giving them their true titles, which for convenience's sake I have not done—should have consented for a day to such an arrangement."

"I don't believe," I said, "that Lady Grace knows a word about it."

"It is that wicked old dowager," he said, "is it? Well, something must be done, but it must be done discreetly, or we shall only make a bad matter worse."

"So the matter ran on from week to week—I half-frightened at what might be the consequence to Aubrey if my secret were discovered, and Hubert growing more and more interested in me. For since you know that he is now my husband, I may as well confess to you that he had committed the indiscretion of falling in love with me outright."

"But at last an event occurred which set all our hopes and fears at naught. Christmas had come, and there was to be a grand ball on Christmas Eve. Althorpe Castle was very ancient, and there were at hand all the facilities for celebrating the affair with the old-time splendour and magnificence. All the old ceremonies were to be observed, and, to crown all, the dancers were to be masked until supper was announced, which was to be by the great clock striking twelve."

"Of course I could not help feeling an interest in the affair. In fact, not a soul within the castle walls or, for that matter, in the village beyond the Park, but had in some nearer or remote degree, an interest in the event."

The dowager Lady Althorpe, my mistress, that is, would not mask, but was to appear as Queen Elizabeth.

She had not outlived the vanity of her youth, and when she had found that her daughter-in-law was to represent Mary Queen of Scots, she was determined to outdo her.

In a single matter, however, fate was against her.

The Althorpe diamonds, which were very magnificent, had of course passed into the possession of Lady Grace Althorpe upon her marriage.

The dowager, however, possessed a set which wanted little of rivalling those of her daughter.

For this occasion she had sent them to London to be reset, and to have three large pendants added, which would make them quite the equal, if not superior to the set which Lady Grace would wear.

No one was supposed to know of this fact but myself, and when the package had arrived I had received it from the messenger, and had placed it in Lady Althorpe's own hands.

After that I knew not what had become of it.

"I was full two hours in powdering and puffing my lady's hair that evening. I thought it would never be done to her mind. Her complexion was another trial to patience, but when at last she was fully made up, and had donned her trailing robe of ruby velvet over a white satin petticoat sown thick with seed pearls, she was indeed magnificent."

"Now, Wallace," she said, "bring me my diamonds."

"My lady forgets," I said, "that I do not know where her diamonds are."

"That is true," she replied. "I did not put them in my jewel-box, thinking the place too insecure. Here, take my keys and go to the safe in my boudoir. You will find them in the third compartment."

"The safe was an elegant affair exteriorly, looking more like a drawing-room ornament that ought also, with its lacquer and mosaic, but I knew it to be of great strength. It had the appearance of a simple cabinet, which might be moved at pleasure, but it was nevertheless so heavy that it required three men to lift it. What was my astonishment, therefore, when I entered the boudoir, to find that the safe was altogether missing!"

"For an instant I was speechless with amazement, as it certainly was not two hours since I had seen it standing in its accustomed place. When, however, I had recovered myself, I returned to Lady Althorpe with a pale face, I am certain, and lips that half refused to do their office."

"My lady," I said, "the safe is not there!"

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed, unable for a moment to comprehend the fact.

"Just what I say," I replied. "The safe is gone. It must have been stolen."

"That is impossible!" she said. Then, when she realised from my face and manner that I had stated a fact, she sprang upon me in her fury. "If my diamonds are gone," she cried in a fearful rage, "it is you who have made away with them!"

"She had rushed past me meantime, and stood in the boudoir contemplating, with a passion such as I had never before seen, the vacant spot where the safe had stood."

"Her screams soon brought the domestics to the spot, and the alarm was quickly given."

"It cannot be an hour since the safe was removed," I said, to some of the gentlemen who were inquiring of me. "It must have been done while I was in the dressing-room in attendance upon Lady Althorpe. No country thieves would have attempted such an exploit. The robbers were from town, you may depend, and though they have carried off the cumbersome safe, they could not transport it far. Let search be instituted at once. I do not believe the plunder is a mile from the castle at this moment."

"What a clear head you have," said Hubert, who was standing by my side.

"But Lady Althorpe would not hear reason."

"It is this girl who is the thief," she cried. "No one but she knew that I had recently had my diamonds reset and their value nearly doubled. She may have communicated with town thieves, but it is she who is the originally guilty party. Let her be secured at once."

"But Hubert Grey was quietly determined that I should be neither arrested nor confined. He communicated my story to his friends among the gentlemen, more than one of whom was acquainted with my brother, and there was no difficulty in procuring sufficient guarantee for my appearance at any time when I might be wanted in court."

"In less than an hour after the discovery the safe was brought in from a cove in the park, where it had evidently been broken open, rifled of its contents, and thrown aside, but the robbers could nowhere be found."

"Detectives were sent for instantly from London, who upon arrival pronounced the work to be that of experienced and daring burglars. They had seized upon the moment when everybody in the house was known to be dressing for the ball, and had placed a ladder against the second-story window, and so had gained access to the boudoir. But on the other hand it was equally certain that they must have been intimately acquainted with the arrangement of the house, and the habits of its inmates. Evidently they must have had some accomplices within the walls of the castle itself, and more than one person I knew shared the belief of Lady Althorpe that that person must have been myself."

"Diligent search was made for the robbers, but they evaded pursuit, and meantime, though there was sufficient grounds to warrant my detention as a witness, there was no evidence upon which an indictment could be secured."

"Aubrey had been telegraphed for, and it was finally arranged that Hubert should accompany me to the Continent."

"It was under these circumstances that Hubert begged for an immediate marriage. For a long time I could not bring myself to consent to take upon myself an honourable name while my own was so clouded, but at last, seeing how much trouble I was causing those whom I loved best, I gave way, and we were married. That was seven years ago. Since then no trace of the diamonds has been obtained, and I fear the reproach will never be taken from my name."

"Meantime I am not unhappy here. Aubrey spends his vacations with me."

"Hubert visits me frequently, though he is now in Parliament, and must necessarily spend much of his time in England."

"I have few relatives to long for, but I do yearn for my own country."

"I have indeed the best husband in the world, and two lovely children, but you will not wonder, knowing all, that I am often absent and dreamy, and that my face sometimes bears a trace of melancholy."

"But Hubert will be here to-morrow, and I could not bear that you should see him without knowing the true story of all his goodness and nobleness to me."

"He will remain for a month, and meantime Aubrey will return to his duties. Poor Aubrey!" she added, laughing; "I fear he will carry away a heavy heart if you do not consent to lighten it before he leaves."

And with this just she finished her story.

As the reader may imagine, I was very curious to see the husband of my friend when he arrived. It was at breakfast that I first met him, and the joyousness which surrounded that happy hour I shall not soon forget."

"Congratulations!" cried Madeleine, the instant introductions were over. "My Hubert has contrived to make himself doubly welcome, since he brings me not only himself, but the best of news. I am free now to go home to my own country. Dear country! how I do long to see her shores once more."

Hubert smiled.

"But your friend is, I imagine, waiting for your news," he said. "Let us give her something more substantial than rhinoceroses."

He then proceeded to inform me that on her death-bed the woman who had been Lady Grace's maid at the time of the robbery had confessed that, having learned by accident Lady Althorpe's determination to have her diamonds reset, she had, with her lady's connivance, sent word to certain disreputable persons in London that such a robbery might be planned and carried out with safety by experienced burglars, and had had the satisfaction of seeing the project safely realised."

Madeline had befriended this wretched woman, and her conscience would not let her die in peace while her benefactor was suffering for crimes which she never committed."

The diamonds were never recovered, but the plot brought its punishment to Lady Grace, for though the dowager was compelled to retire to her own dower house, and cease her interference in the affairs of her daughter-in-law, Lady Grace herself was brought into so bad odour that she was obliged to leave the country."

Mr. Grey remained for a week in the pleasant seclusion of the Poplars, and then our little party broke up."

On the evening before our departure, Aubrey Wallace joined me for a walk on the beach which had been the scene of our first meeting."

I shall not detail the conversation which passed between us."

It is only necessary to say that we parted next day as those who have an especial interest in meeting again, and when we met again in Rome, it was to celebrate our bridal, which occurred during the week before the Carnival."

(To be Continued.)

FACETIÆ.

WHEN SHE WILL MARRY HERBERT.

A BEAUTIFUL and bashful young woman of about nineteen summers called at the office of a life assurance agent last week and asked:

"How long will a man of 67, and that eats peas with his knife, live?"

"According to our table, madame," replied the agent, "he should, on an average, survive 11 years, 3 months and 16 days."

"That," said his visitor, "would be till the 1st of August, 1887?"

"Precisely, madame."

"And how much could I insure his life for?"

"Oh, for any amount, say for £5,000," he answered, taking up a blank form of application.

"Well," said the young woman, "I think, then, that I'll marry him."

"Insure him, you mean?" replied the agent.

"No, marry him; you insure him. You see," she added, with a sudden burst of confidence, "I love Herbert, and Mr. Dawkins is old enough to be my grandfather. But Herbert is poor, and I just worship the corner lots that Mr. Dawkins builds on. And Herbert is very patient and says that if I will only fix a day, no matter how long he may have to wait, he will be happy. Now you say Mr. Dawkins will die by the first of August, 1887, and as it wouldn't be decent to marry again till I've been a year in mourning, I'll arrange to marry Herbert on the 2nd of August, 1888."

TELLING A STORY AT A DINNER PARTY.

MR. SMITH was at a dinner-party given a few days ago at Boddley's. While the company was at the table, Smith said, in a loud voice:

"By-the-by, did you read that 'mighty' good thing in the paper the other day about the woman over in Fenchester? It was one of the most amusing things that ever came under my observation. The woman's name, you see, was Emma. Well, sir, there were two young fellows paying attention to her, and after she'd accepted one of them, the other also proposed to her, and as she felt certain the first one wasn't in earnest, she accepted the second, too. So a few days later both of them called at the same time, both claimed her hand, and both insisted on marrying her at once. Then, of course, she found herself face to face with a very unpleasant—unpleasant—er—er how was what? the word I want—Unpleasant—er—er—Blowed if I haven't forgotten that word!"

"Predictment?" suggested Boddley.

"No, that's not it; what's the name of that thing with two horns? Unpleasant or—er—er—Hang it! its gone clean out of my mind."

"A cow?" hinted Miss Griddle.

"No, not a cow."

"May be it's a Buffalo?" remarked Doctor Potts.

"No, no kind of animal; something else with two horns. Mighty queer I can't recall it."

"Perhaps it's a brass band?" observed Butterwick.

"You don't mean a fire-company?" asked Mrs. Boddley.

"N—no. That's the confounded queerest thing I ever heard of, that I can't remember that word," said Mr. Smith, getting warm and beginning to feel miserable.

"Well, give us the rest of the story without," said Mr. Boddley.

"That's the mischief of it," said Mr. Smith. "The whole jolly turns on that infernal word."

"Two horns, did you say?" asked Doctor Potts; "may be it is a catfish?"

"Or a snail?" remarked the judge.

"N—no—none of those."

"It's an elephant or a walrus?" asked Mrs. Potts.

"I guess I'll have to give it up," said Mr. Smith, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Well, that's the silliest old story I ever run across," remarked Butterwick to Boddley. Then everybody smiled, and Mr. Smith excused himself upon the ground that he had to meet a man, and he withdrew.

The mystery is yet unsolved.

ESQ.—"Madam," said a doctor to a patient, recently, "when anything is cured it's ended."

"I can tell you something that ain't ended when it's cured," said the little boy who happened to hear the remark.

"What is it?" asked the doctor, smilingly.

"A ham!" And he "scud" out of the room.

THE directions for roasting a hare and portraying grief on the stage are identical—first catch your hair.

WHEN a young man gets the impression that he's as handsome as a picture, isn't it about time for somebody to take him down?

HOW HE WAS SWORN.

THE witness had served in one of the Indiana regiments, and had come home from the wars with both arms shot off. He lost one arm at Fort Donaldson and the other at Lookout Mountain. When he came forward to testify, the clerk commenced to administer the oath.

"You solemnly swear—"

"Stop! stop!" interrupted the judge (now installed, with overpowering dignity. "The witness will hold up his right hand when he is sworn."

"Your Honour," replied the clerk, meekly, "the man has no right hand."

"Then let him hold up his left hand."

"If your Honour will remember, the witness has no left hand, either. He had the misfortune to lose the—both in battle."

Perhaps the clerk thought by this last bit of information to bring the judge down from his height of displeasure; but he reckoned without his host.

"Then let him hold up his right leg. A witness cannot be sworn in this court without holding up something! Silence, all of you! This court knows the law, and will maintain it."

The witness was sworn on one leg.

A VERY popular but blind Count lives in the Champs Elysees. Being witty and musical, his society is much sought after. He left Paris three months ago, and on his return called on a fashionable Marchioness who was preparing to go to a fancy ball. She begged to be excused, but as he had an important message to deliver, he was shown in, and being of course blind, he was asked to take a chair in her boudoir. Gossip ceased, and during all the time the

Marchioness, assisted by her maid, entered the mysteries of her toilet. Being ready to descend to her carriage, the Count started he had been absent in London, had undergone a successful operation for catarrh, and could now see as well as the Marchioness. The latter shrieked, and jumped into her carriage without even an adieu to her unwelcome visitor.

A SPLENDID TEACHER

DR. VINCENT, speaking of one of the open secrets of successful teaching, illustrates in this way:

A little girl was entertaining me very pleasantly. I was waiting for a friend to come. I said to her:

"You go to Sunday-school?"

"Oh yes, I go to Sunday-school."

"You have a good teacher?"

"Oh yes! I have a splendid teacher—a magnificent teacher!"

When the girl says "splendid" and "magnificent" they mean nothing; so I said:

"You prepare your lessons during the week?"

"Oh yes; teacher makes us do that."

I said:

"Give my compliments to your teacher. A teacher who makes her scholars prepare their Sunday-school lessons during the week must be a very good teacher."

"Well," she said, "I don't mean she makes us; thinking her way of stating it reflected on the spirit of the teacher."

"Ah!" I said, "you have spotted a good story."

"Well, I don't mean she makes us get our lessons."

"What do you mean, then?" I asked.

"I mean that she teaches us so that we love to get our lessons!"

So I multiplied the compliments a hundred fold, and said:

"A teacher who teaches so as to make the scholars love to get their lessons is indeed a splendid teacher—a magnificent teacher."

MOSLEM MARRIAGES.—Brokers generally arrange these marriages, though there are some love matches in which the parties become attached to each other without the intervention of a third party. When a man has reached the marrying age he is expected to enter the matrimonial ranks, unless he is prevented by poverty or some other impediment, and it is considered improper and even dishonourable for him to refrain from so doing. If a marriageable youth has a mother she describes to him the girls of her acquaintance, and thus enables him to decide whom to take to his home and home. Frequently he engages the services of a woman marriage-broker, who has access to harems where there are marriageable women, and is employed by them quite as often as by the men. She receives fees from one party, and frequently from both. In her visits to the harems she is accompanied by the mother or other feminine relative of the young man; she introduces them to the women, but gives a sly hint as to the object of their call. If they do not like the appearance of the maiden they plead many calls to make, and out short their stay; but if satisfied, they come to business at once, and ask how much property, personal or otherwise, the young lady possesses. When these facts are ascertained they depart, with the intimation that they may call again. If the young man is satisfied with the report of the broker, he sends her again to the harem to state his own prospects in life, and, if that lady looks favourably on his suit, the match is made. Everything is arranged by deputy, and the Mahomedan lover does not see the face of his mistress until she is his wife.

THE VAIN RHINOCEROS.—A rhinoceros who was drinking at a limpid stream observed therein the reflected image of his horn and legs. "Alas!" quoth he, "that animal with such massive legs should be disgraced by so insignificant a horn." At this moment his meditations were interrupted by the baying of a pack of hounds. Away he fled, but his legs refused to convey him with sufficient speed, and he disseminated crude savagery meat and driving gloves over that section of the continent. "I see," he cried, as he exalted the last hound into the spacious firmament on high, "that the legs I admired would have proved my ruin had not my despised horn insured my safety." Moral.—Some people don't know what's good for them.

A REAL THEATRICAL PRINCESS.—A young sourette actress is creating a sensation in Berlin, not exactly by her acting or singing, about which nothing need be said. The interest taken in this star of the Woltersdorf Theatre centres in her history. "Miss" Lori Stübel is a princess, and may by right assume that title. A Berlin paper informs us that Miss Lori Stübel performed at the Woltersdorf Theatre some years ago, and was afterwards engaged at a provincial

theatre in Eastern Prussia. After turning the brains of many she selected her master, and was next heard of as Princess Stübel. Her life and her general extravagances were of the wildest and most astounding. The hunting feasts over which she presided have been termed feasts of Diana. But, alas, there is an end to all things. The family of the prince protested against the extravagance, and took other steps, the result of which was that the feasts ended, and small routs took the place of the boundless revenue. The prince emigrated; his wife returned to the stage; although she had already laid the foundation of a considerable fortune; and the present of 50,000 thalers which she had received from a Berlin Privy Counsellor of Commerce had been safely banked. Miss Stübel has a fine house in Vienna, and owns a villa and many other little comforts.

THE MOWER.

Swing swong, swing swong,
My hammock swings slow 'neath the apple-tree boughs.

As I lazily lie

Looking up at the sky,

Blue in the splendour of royal July.
From far fresh fields comes the low of ows;

In the meadow I hear the mower's song.
As he leans on his scythe for a moment, and then—

Swing swong, swing swong,
He bends with a will to his work again.

II.

Swing swong, swing swong,
The mower is lusty in youth's young prime,

His step is firm,

And stalwart his arm,

His face is stamped with manhood's charm.
His scythe and my hammock together keep time,

I lazily swinging; he cutting, with strong firm strokes, wide swaths in the grass and flowers.

Swing swong, swing swong,
He bends to his work through the sunny hours.

III.

Cling clang, cling clang,
He is whetting his scythe, and the drowsy air

Is stirred by the peal

Of stone against steel,

As he sharpens the blade from point to heel.
The sun shines hot with a mid-day glare,

But he bends to his work, never ceasing his song;
I sigh as I swing; he works and still sings.

Swing swong, swing swong,
Far over the meadow his clear voice rings.

IV.

Swing swong, swing swong,
"If I had but a thousand a year," hear him sing.

"What a man would I be,

And what sights would I see,

If I had but a thousand a year." Ah, me!
Little he thinks that I, as I swing,

To be young with such youth, with such strength strong,
Would gladly give ten times "a thousand a year."

Swing swong, swing swong;
Time teaches us much, but the teaching costs dear.

B. G.

GEMS.

CARE for what you say, or what you say will make you care.

ROB a man of his life, and you'll be hung; rob him of his living, and you may be applauded.

PEOPLE love those to whom they have done good offices, and hate those to whom they have done injuries.

PACK your cares in as small a space as you can, so that you can carry them yourself and not let them annoy others.

THE water that has no taste is purest; the rain that has no odour is freshest; and of all the modifications of manner, the most generally pleasing is simplicity.

SENSIBILITY is like the stars, that can lead one only when the sky is clear. Reason is the magnetic needle that guides the ship when they are wrapt in darkness.

Few parents like to be told of the faults of a child. The reason is obvious. All faults are either hereditary or educational; and in either case, to point a finger at a child is, indirectly, to reproach the parent.

WHEN you meet with great and unexpected offers of friendship, receive them respectfully, but with a moderate degree of caution; endeavour to discover whether they flow from a warm heart and a silly head, or from a designing head and a cold heart; knavery and folly are often hardly to be distinguished.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

APPLE PUFFS.—These are nice for party suppers, and, in fact, are good any time, but rather too tedious to make for frequent use. The quickest way of making them is to roll two large sheets of dough on separate boards, and put as many tiny spots of mashed or sifted sauce upon one of them as you judge there will be room to make puff; then cover it with the other sheet, which should be a trifle larger, and cut out with a biscuit-cutter wherever there is a bunch of sauce. If too much sauce is put in it will stew out badly and disfigure them; prior strew them with a three-tined fork—if you have nothing better—to press the edges together and keep in the joints.

JELLY-MORSE.—Should be washed with the white of egg to insure a clear impression. Dipping in hot water spoils the sharpness of outline.

LACE CURTAINS.—On putting away lace curtains they should be washed and folded up rough-dried—no starch in them.

TO TAKE THE STAIN OFF WORN SILK.—Use spirits of ammonia or alcohol diluted with water, and applied with a sponge. To renovate old black silk, use the same and press on the inside.

OFFENSIVE BREATH.—A good disinfectant for offensive breath when arising from a foul stomach is a small half-tea spoonful of soda dissolved in a third of a tumbler of water taken in the morning.

PIMPLES.—Take a teaspoonful of oatmeal, and cook in three tablespoonfuls of water half an hour, then strain through a thin cloth, and apply with a soft sponge three times a day for two or three months. This should be washed off as soon as thoroughly dry. It will cure pimples on the face, unless caused by a diseased stomach.

RATS.—A handful of fresh chloride lime sprinkled in rat-holes will keep them away for months.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A TRUTHFUL SKETCH.—Let a man fall in business, what an effect it has on his former creditors! Men who have taken him by the arm, laughed and chatted with him by the hour, shrug their shoulders and pass on with a cold "how do you do?" Every trifle of a bill is hunted up and presented that would not have seen the light for months to come, but for the misfortune of the debtor. If it is paid, well and good; if not, the scowl of the sheriff, perhaps, meets him at the corner. A man that has never failed knows but little of human nature. In prosperity he sails along gently, wafted by favouring smiles and kind words from everybody. He prides himself on his name and spotless character, and makes his boast that he has not an enemy in the world. Alas! the change. He looks at the world in a different light when reverses come upon him. He hardly knows how to move or to do this thing or the other; there are spies about him, a writ is ready for his back. To know what kind of stuff the world is made of, a person must be unfortunate and stop paying once in his lifetime. If he has kind friends, then they are made manifest. A failure is a moral sieve—it brings out the wheat and shows the chaff. A man thus learns that words and pretended good will are not and do not constitute real friendship.

A SINGLE SNOWFLAKE.—A scientific cotemporary states that in a drop of water obtained from a single snowflake, and magnified five hundred times, were found pieces of coal, fragments of cloth, grains of starch, sandy matter, and an immense variety of other substances, not a fragment of which exceeded in diameter the three-thousandth part of an inch.

AMONG the treasures recently brought to light in Pompeii is a silver altar, on which were placed two silver cups and spoons, the latter precisely like those used now.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A FOOLISH LITTLE GIRL.—We always condemn flirtation, and advise our correspondent to try and improve the conduct of her lover by acting herself with due respect and discretion, which will merit like behaviour on the part of her lover, who we think must be fond of her. The difference of age is rather in his favour than otherwise.

A WRETCHED ONE.—We are sorry for your almost helpless condition. If you are illused as you describe you can get protection from his violence by an application to a magistrate; and should he refuse you support after such a course, and you proceed to support yourself, you can get a protection order upon whatever property you become possessed of by your own personal industry, but not upon profits accrued by the employment of labour.

X. M.—We have no advice to give to any young lady who avows that she loves two young men with equal affection, and does not know which to choose. Real love is always single in its object. We should pity any man who should marry a woman that loved another man as well as she did her husband.

SMALL BORE.—The term ordnance, as meaning great guns, appears to have its origin in the circumstance that formerly certain men-at-arms, who were archers, were called *condemners* des ordonnances, and that when cannon came into use, to them was committed the artillery. In this way, it is probable the word ordonnances (whence ordnance) came to signify great guns.

AN ORPHAN.—Do not be too impatient. Wise young men do not speak of love until they have convinced themselves that their affections are worthily received, and would be sincerely returned. Men who constantly vow and protest, quote poetry, and mangle sentiment, generally carry their hearts on their lips.

ADA.—Damp weather variously affects all bodies. For instance, paper, parchment, all woods, and animal membranes, are lengthened and increased when the atmosphere is humid. Cords, on the contrary, being composed of short and slight filaments, swell and thicken. It is on this principle that the strings of a piano, strung tightly, break in wet weather. The humidity, by penetrating them, increases their tension, and being restrained, they snap.

B. J. L.—The distance both of the moon and the sun from the earth is enormous; if given in figures, they would probably slip through your memory; but you may retain the knowledge better if we say that a railway train travelling incessantly at the speed of thirty miles an hour would take eleven months to reach the moon; and travelling at the same velocity, 365 years to reach the sun!

A SUBSCRIBER FOR FOUR YEARS.—In your debilitated state it would be madness to marry again. After your course of life, live temperately, and eat nourishing food. With the assistance of the advice of a regular practitioner, you would soon regain your natural good health.

ELLEN D.—We would not advise a young lady eighteen years old (or any other age) to marry a man who is given to drinking, smoking, or card-playing.

EMILY.—To remove the glossy appearance produced on the skin after washing with soap, breathe on the towel, and then rub your face with it; this is a simple remedy, but efficacious.

A. G.—You must learn to acquire more confidence, as the reason why you blush when you are spoken to is from excess of bashfulness.

JAMES H. LINS.—Steel instruments of nearly all kinds may be protected from rust by varnishing them with a mixture of one-fifth part of oil of turpentine, to three-fifths of well-refined spirits of turpentine. This varnish is applied by means of a sponge, and the articles so varnished will retain a bright, hard, smooth surface.

P. JONES.—Your philosophy is wrong. Jean Paul Richter says, "No one can either live piously or die righteously without a wife," and we endorse the sentiment. To desire to be married is natural to all properly-constituted minds, whether in men or women.

F. F. F. is attached to a girl, but has never made a promise of marriage. He fears that should he marry her he will be burdened with her poor relations. Such love is a very cold affair, and with such a cold calculating disposition we think he need not labour under much apprehension about the poor relatives. But for the girl's sake, perhaps, the wisest thing would be to discontinue the acquaintance.

PORT TOMPION, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-

one, dark hair, hazel eyes, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady of good temper and prepossessing appearance.

BLACK WARD, a seaman in the Royal Navy, medium height, fair complexion, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a good looking young woman, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

SOLDIER DEAN, a seaman in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with a young lady between nineteen and twenty-three, who must be fond of dancing, music, and home, and thoroughly domesticated.

FREDERICK and WILLIAM, two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies, with a view to matrimony. Frederick is twenty-two, medium height, considered good looking. William is twenty-two, dark complexion, medium height, fond of home, and can play a piano.

ROVING BILL and DARING TOM, two seamen in the Royal Navy, respectively twenty and twenty-two, would like to correspond with two handsome young ladies about twenty.

DEEP SEA LEAD and PATENT LOG, two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies, with a view to matrimony. Deep Sea Lead is twenty-one, medium height, fair complexion, hazel eyes, considered good looking. Patent Log is twenty, rather short, hazel eyes, considered good looking; respondents must be good looking, thoroughly domesticated, and fond of home.

WHAT IS LOVE?

What is that, that they call love?
Is't mere imagination?
Is't from below or above?
Is't only a sensation?

I have travell'd near and far
Yet I've never come across'd it,
Does't belong to earth or star?
Is it strange that I have lost it?

Still I have seen some quite craz'd,
Their head seem'd clean off their
Shoulders,
To me I was quite amaz'd,
For love in me never smoulders.

To some 'tis an awful jest;
To me a mere illusion,
For some, it may be the best,
And that is my conclusion.

P. C.

THE HAUNTED SPRING.

Down in the glen of Ravenhoe,
Beside its fountain clear,
The village maidens went to go
When violets first appear,
To watch the shadow slip to pass
Across the deep spring's sheet of glass,
Of lover fond and true,
Which only shows its face, they say,
Between the sunset parking ray
And fall of evening dew.

And thitherward May Merton went,
With soft and timid tread,
And o'er the magic fountain bent
Her modest little head.
"If fairer, happier maid than I
Can in these haunted waters spy
Their future loves," thought she,
"I wonder what the fates might bring
Unto a friendless underling,
A joyless drudge like me!"

With troubled glance she searched the pool,
Then caught her breath in fear;
For, framed in ferns and mosses cool,
The dark face did appear
Of one whose image long had caused,
When'er in secret thought she paused,
Her heart to strangely stir.
Beside the shadow of her own
That face within the water shone,
And softly smiled at her.

Her blushes came, her bosom leapt,
She rose in vague alarm,
But 'round her slender figure crept
A round and tender arm.
And as the farmer, Philip Green,
(For his the face that she had seen)
Controlled her rising fear,
She saw the love he could not speak
In glowing eye and burning cheek,
Yet came his whisper clear:

"Forgive me, sweet! the light deceit—
I followed as you roved,
And with you read the water-sheet,
To know if I was loved.
Oh, sweet May Merton, flower of spring!
No longer pass an underling
Beneath your uncle's roof.
When you, by wedding Farmer Phil,
But carry out fate's secret will,
And put the fount to proof!"

N. D. U.

MEDIA would like to correspond with a young man in a good position.

A. B. C. a lady with means, forty-eight, wishes to correspond with a respectable man.

NORA, nineteen, tall, light complexion, considered good looking, will have 5000 on her wedding day, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be tall, good looking, and steady.

ROBERT, twenty-six, rather tall, stout, dark, good looking, has travelled a great deal with good income, would like to correspond with a good looking young lady, who must have a loving disposition and good temper; money no object.

ROSS, twenty-two, fair complexion, loving disposition, with good expectations, would like to correspond with a young gentleman of a loving disposition, with a view to matrimony.

A. M., twenty-one, tall, dark, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady, with a view to matrimony.

HYACINTHE and EMILY wish to correspond with two young men. Hyacinthe is nineteen, medium height, fair, dark gray eyes; would prefer a sailor. Emily is seventeen, dark and petite, dark brown hair, blue eyes, and affectionate.

CARIE, twenty, medium height, dark blue eyes, brown hair, good tempered, fond of home, in a good situation as lady's-maid, would like to correspond with a young man of good position, with a view to matrimony.

MARY ANN H., twenty, rather short, would like to correspond with a respectable young man, with a view to matrimony.

G. B., twenty-four, dark hair, blue eyes, considered good looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady about his own age, with a view to matrimony; respondent must be fair and possess some money.

EDWARD and RICHARD, two friends, with good prospects, both fond of home, wish to correspond with two young ladies, with a view to matrimony. Edward is twenty, rather tall, and Richard is nineteen, dark, and rather tall; respondents must be affectionate, well-educated, and fond of home.

HALF DEER and DAY WANDS wish to correspond with two young ladies, who must be tall, fair hair, good looking, good tempered and fond of home.

W. G., twenty-seven, rather tall, black hair, dark eyes, a tradesman, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-two, with a view to matrimony.

ALBERT, twenty-five, of a loving disposition, tall, fair, has a good income, would like to correspond with a young woman, who must be of medium height, fair complexion.

ANNE, twenty-seven, medium height, has a little money, would like to correspond with a gentleman from twenty-seven to thirty-four.

ROBERT M., a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, dark, tall, wishes to correspond with a pretty, thoroughly domesticated young lady about nineteen, with a view to matrimony.

S. S. P., twenty-seven, tall, fair complexion, medium height, well connected, would like to correspond with a tall young lady.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

TOM is responded to by—Marie.

DEBBY by—Marie.

LIEBIE by—Albert.

JENNIE by—Harry, who thinks she is all he requires.

BEAT by—Lillian Emily, pretty, good expectations, and thinks she will suit him.

S. B. B. by—A Widow, who has some money and a good income, of a loving disposition, fond of children, has a good home, good tempered and fond of home comforts.

ALBERT VICTOR by—Adelaide, brown hair, blue eyes, in a good position, who thinks she is all he desires.

TOM by—Helen H., thoroughly domesticated, light brown hair and blue eyes, and would make him a loving wife.

J. H. B. by—Marian A., eighteen, medium height, fair complexion, dark brown hair, ladylike, and considered good looking.

BERTIE by—Nell, eighteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, light brown hair, industrious, well educated, and would make a loving wife.

H. S. by—A. B., medium height, blue eyes, dark brown hair, in a good position.

WIRT by—K. S., eighteen, petite, good figure, long about hair, well educated, is musical, and of good family.

S. K. E., Dot, a widow for fourteen years, forty-six, well educated, affectionate, and very fond of children, she is very lonely, and has a good business entirely her own.

NETTA by—B. twenty-six, good looking, fond of home, good tempered, in business for himself, and thinks he is all she requires.

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London: Published for the Proprietor, at 33A, Strand, by G. A. SAUNDERS.

